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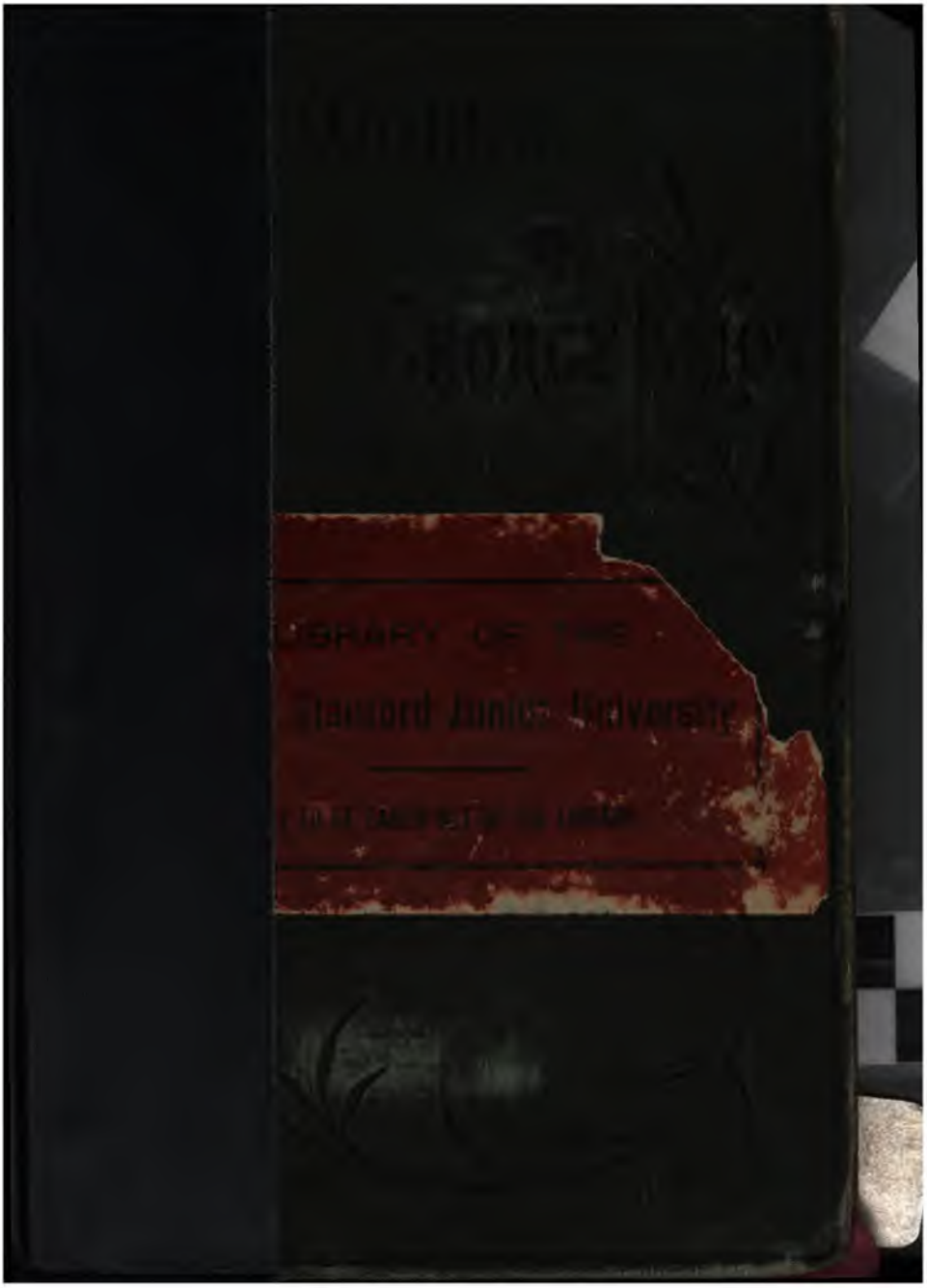
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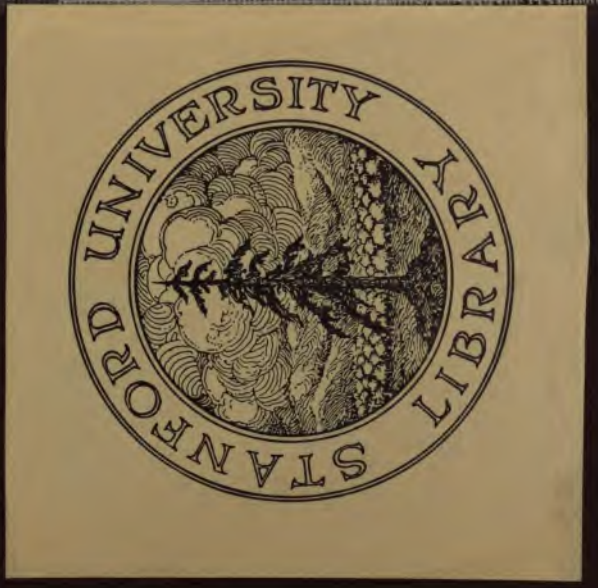
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THE WORKS

OF

GEORGE ELIOT

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Let thy chief terror be of thine own soul:
There, 'mid the throng of hurrying desires
That trample on the dead to seize their spoil,
Lurks vengeance, footless, irresistible
As exhalations laden with slow death,
And o'er the fairest troop of captured joys
Breathes pallid pestilence.

THE WORKS

OF

GEORGE ELIOT

DANIEL DERONDA

VOL. III.

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BOOK VI.

REVELATIONS

(CONTINUED)

DANIEL DERONDA.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Fairy folk a-listening
Hear the seed sprout in the spring,
And for music to their dance
Hear the hedgerows wake from trance,
Sap that trembles into buds
Sending little rhythmic floods
Of fairy sound in fairy ears.
Thus all beauty that appears
Has birth as sound to finer sense
And lighter-clad intelligence.

And Gwendolen? — She was thinking of Deronda much more than he was thinking of her — often wondering what were his ideas "about things," and how his life was occupied. But a lap-dog would be necessarily at a loss in framing to itself the motives and adventures of doghood at large; and it was as far from Gwendolen's conception that Deronda's life could be determined by the historical destiny of the Jews, as that he could rise into the air on a brazen horse, and so vanish from her horizon in the form of a twinkling star.

With all the sense of inferiority that had been forced upon her, it was inevitable that she should imagine a larger place for herself in his thoughts than she actually possessed. They must be rather old and wise persons who are not apt to see their own anxiety or elation about themselves reflected in other minds; and Gwendolen, with her youth and inward solitude, may be excused for dwelling on signs of special interest in her shown by the one person who had impressed her with the feeling of submission, and for mistaking the colour and proportion of those signs in the mind of Deronda.

Meanwhile, what would he tell her that she ought to do? "He said, I must get more interest in others, and more knowledge, and that I must care about the best things—but how am I to begin?" She wondered what books he would tell her to take up to her own room, and recalled the famous writers that she had either not looked into or had found the most unreadable, with a half-smiling wish that she could mischievously ask Deronda if they were not the books called "medicine for the mind." Then she repented of her sauciness, and when she was safe from observation carried up a miscellaneous selection—Descartes, Bacon, Locke, Butler, Burke, Guizot—knowing, as a clever young lady of education, that these authors were ornaments of mankind, feeling sure that Deronda had read them, and hoping that by dipping into them all in succession, with her rapid understanding she might get a point of view nearer to his level.

But it was astonishing how little time she found

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visit alone enabled her to bear up under the pressure of painful facts which were urging themselves anew. The seven family kisses were not so tiresome as they used to be.

"Mr Grandcourt is gone out, so I determined to fill up the time by coming to you, mamma," said Gwendolen, as she laid down her hat and seated herself next to her mother; and then looking at her with a playfully monitory air, "That is a punishment to you for not wearing better lace on your head. You didn't think I should come and detect you—you dreadfully careless-about-yourself mamma!" She gave a caressing touch to the dear head.

"Scold me, dear," said Mrs Davilow, her delicate worn face flushing with delight. "But I wish there was something you could eat after your ride—instead of these scraps. Let Jocosa make you a cup of chocolate in your old way. You used to like that."

Miss Merry immediately rose and went out, though Gwendolen said, "Oh no, a piece of bread, or one of those hard biscuits. I can't think about eating. I am come to say good-bye."

"What! going to Ryelands again?" said Mr Gascoigne.

"No, we are going to town," said Gwendolen, beginning to break up a piece of bread, but putting no morsel into her mouth.

"It is rather early to go to town," said Mrs Gascoigne, "and Mr Grandcourt not in Parliament."

"Oh, there is only one more day's hunting to be

had, and Henleigh has some business in town with lawyers, I think," said Gwendolen. "I am very glad. I shall like to go to town."

"You will see your house in Grosvenor Square," said Mrs Davilow. She and the girls were devouring with their eyes every movement of their goddess, soon to vanish.

"Yes," said Gwendolen, in a tone of assent to the interest of that expectation. "And there is so much to be seen and done in town."

"I wish, my dear Gwendolen," said Mr Gascoigne, in a tone of cordial advice, "that you would use your influence with Mr Grandcourt to induce him to enter Parliament. A man of his position should make his weight felt in politics. The best judges are confident that the ministry will have to appeal to the country on this question of further Reform, and Mr Grandcourt should be ready for the opportunity. I am not quite sure that his opinions and mine accord entirely; I have not heard him express himself very fully. But I don't look at the matter from that point of view. I am thinking of your husband's standing in the country. And he has now come to that stage of life when a man like him should enter into public affairs. A wife has great influence with her husband. Use yours in that direction, my dear."

The Rector felt that he was acquitting himself of a duty here, and giving something like the aspect of a public benefit to his niece's match. To Gwendolen the whole speech had the flavour of bitter comedy. If she had been merry, she must have

laughed at her uncle's explanation to her that he had not heard Grandcourt express himself very fully on politics. And the wife's great influence! General maxims about husbands and wives seemed now of a precarious usefulness. Gwendolen herself had once believed in her future influence as an omnipotence in managing—she did not know exactly what. But her chief concern at present was to give an answer that would be felt appropriate.

"I should be very glad, uncle. But I think Mr Grandcourt would not like the trouble of an election—at least, unless it could be without his making speeches. I thought candidates always made speeches."

"Not necessarily—to any great extent," said Mr Gascoigne. "A man of position and weight can get on without much of it. A county member need have very little trouble in that way, and both out of the House and in it is liked the better for not being a speechifier. Tell Mr Grandcourt that I say so."

"Here comes Jocosa with my chocolate after all," said Gwendolen, escaping from a promise to give information that would certainly have been received in a way inconceivable to the good Rector, who, pushing his chair a little aside from the table and crossing his leg, looked as well as felt like a worthy specimen of a clergyman and magistrate giving experienced advice. Mr Gascoigne had come to the conclusion that Grandcourt was a proud man, but his own self-love, calmed through life by the consciousness of his general value and personal advan-

tages, was not irritable enough to prevent him from hoping the best about his niece's husband because her uncle was kept rather haughtily at a distance. A certain aloofness must be allowed to the representative of an old family; you would not expect him to be on intimate terms even with abstractions. But Mrs Gascoigne was less dispassionate on her husband's account, and felt Grandcourt's haughtiness as something a little blameable in Gwendolen.

"Your uncle and Anna will very likely be in town about Easter," she said, with a vague sense of expressing a slight discontent. "Dear Rex hopes to come out with honours and a fellowship, and he wants his father and Anna to meet him in London, that they may be jolly together, as he says. I shouldn't wonder if Lord Brackenshaw invited them, he has been so very kind since he came back to the Castle."

"I hope my uncle will bring Anna to stay in Grosvenor Square," said Gwendolen, risking herself so far, for the sake of the present moment, but in reality wishing that she might never be obliged to bring any of her family near Grandcourt again. "I am very glad of Rex's good fortune."

"We must not be premature, and rejoice too much beforehand," said the Rector, to whom this topic was the happiest in the world, and altogether allowable, now that the issue of that little affair about Gwendolen had been so satisfactory. "Not but that I am in correspondence with impartial judges, who have the highest hopes about my son, as a singularly clear-headed young man. And of

his excellent disposition and principle I have had the best evidence."

"We shall have him a great lawyer some time," said Mrs Gascoigne.

"How very nice!" said Gwendolen, with a concealed scepticism as to niceness in general, which made the word quite applicable to lawyers.

"Talking of Lord Brackenshaw's kindness," said Mrs Davilow, "you don't know how delightful he has been, Gwendolen. He has begged me to consider myself his guest in this house till I can get another that I like—he did it in the most graceful way. But now a house has turned up. Old Mr Jodson is dead, and we can have his house. It is just what I want; small, but with nothing hideous to make you miserable thinking about it. And it is only a mile from the Rectory. You remember the low white house nearly hidden by the trees, as we turn up the lane to the church?"

"Yes, but you have no furniture, poor mamma," said Gwendolen, in a melancholy tone.

"Oh, I am saving money for that. You know who has made me rather rich, dear," said Mrs Davilow, laying her hand on Gwendolen's. "And Jocosa really makes so little do for housekeeping—it is quite wonderful."

"Oh, please let me go up-stairs with you and arrange my hat, mamma," said Gwendolen, suddenly putting up her hand to her hair and perhaps creating a desired disarrangement. Her heart was swelling, and she was ready to cry. Her mother *must* have been worse off, if it had not been for Grandcourt.

"I suppose I shall never see all this again," said Gwendolen, looking round her, as they entered the black and yellow bedroom, and then throwing herself into a chair in front of the glass with a little groan as of bodily fatigue. In the resolve not to cry she had become very pale.

"You are not well, dear?" said Mrs Davilow.

"No; that chocolate has made me sick," said Gwendolen, putting up her hand to be taken.

"I should be allowed to come to you if you were ill, darling," said Mrs Davilow, rather timidly, as she pressed the hand to her bosom. Something had made her sure to-day that her child loved her—needed her as much as ever.

"Oh yes," said Gwendolen, leaning her head against her mother, though speaking as lightly as she could. "But you know I never am ill. I am as strong as possible; and you must not take to fretting about me, but make yourself as happy as you can with the girls. They are better children to you than I have been, you know." She turned up her face with a smile.

"You have always been good, my darling. I remember nothing else."

"Why, what did I ever do that was good to you, except marry Mr Grandcourt?" said Gwendolen, starting up with a desperate resolve to be playful, and keep no more on the perilous edge of agitation. "And I should not have done *that* unless it had pleased myself." She tossed up her chin, and reached her hat.

"God forbid, child! I would not have had you

marry for my sake. Your happiness by itself is half mine."

"Very well," said Gwendolen, arranging her hat fastidiously, "then you will please to consider that you are half happy, which is more than I am used to seeing you." With the last words she again turned with her old playful smile to her mother. "Now I am ready; but oh, mamma, Mr Grandcourt gives me a quantity of money, and expects me to spend it, and I can't spend it; and you know I can't bear charity children and all that; and here are thirty pounds. I wish the girls would spend it for me on little things for themselves when you go to the new house. Tell them so." Gwendolen put the notes into her mother's hand and looked away hastily, moving towards the door.

"God bless you, dear," said Mrs Davilow. "It will please them so that you should have thought of *them* in particular."

"Oh, they are troublesome things; but they don't trouble me now," said Gwendolen, turning and nodding playfully. She hardly understood her own feeling in this act towards her sisters, but at any rate she did not wish it to be taken as anything serious. She was glad to have got out of the bedroom without showing more signs of emotion, and she went through the rest of her visit and all the good-byes with a quiet propriety that made her say to herself sarcastically as she rode away, "I think I am making a very good Mrs Grandcourt."

She believed that her husband was gone to Gadsmere that day—had inferred this, as she had long

ago inferred who were the inmates of what he had described as "a dog-hutch of a place in a black country;" and the strange conflict of feeling within her had had the characteristic effect of sending her to Offendene with a tightened resolve—a form of excitement which was native to her.

She wondered at her own contradictions. Why should she feel it bitter to her that Grandcourt showed concern for the beings on whose account she herself was undergoing remorse? Had she not before her marriage inwardly determined to speak and act on their behalf?—and since he had lately implied that he wanted to be in town because he was making arrangements about his will, she ought to have been glad of any sign that he kept a conscience awake towards those at Gadsmere; and yet, now that she was a wife, the sense that Grandcourt was gone to Gadsmere was like red heat near a burn. She had brought on herself this indignity in her own eyes—this humiliation of being doomed to a terrified silence lest her husband should discover with what sort of consciousness she had married him; and as she had said to Deronda, she "must go on." After the intensest moments of secret hatred towards this husband who from the very first had cowed her, there always came back the spiritual pressure which made submission inevitable. There was no effort at freedom that would not bring fresh and worse humiliation. Gwendolen could dare nothing except in impulsive action—least of all could she dare premeditatedly a vague future in which the only certain condition was indignity. In

spite of remorse, it still seemed the worst result of her marriage that she should in any way make a spectacle of herself; and her humiliation was lightened by her thinking that only Mrs Glasher was aware of the fact which caused it. For Gwendolen had never referred the interview at the Whispering Stones to Lush's agency; her disposition to vague terror investing with shadowy omnipresence any threat of fatal power over her, and so hindering her from imagining plans and channels by which news had been conveyed to the woman who had the poisoning skill of a sorceress. To Gwendolen's mind the secret lay with Mrs Glasher, and there were words in the horrible letter which implied that Mrs Glasher would dread disclosure to the husband, as much as the usurping Mrs Grandcourt.

Something else, too, she thought of as more of a secret from her husband than it really was—namely, that suppressed struggle of desperate rebellion which she herself dreaded. Grandcourt could not indeed fully imagine how things affected Gwendolen: he had no imagination of anything in her but what affected the gratification of his own will; but on this point he had the sensibility which seems like divination. What we see exclusively we are apt to see with some mistake of proportions; and Grandcourt was not likely to be infallible in his judgments concerning this wife who was governed by many shadowy powers, to him non-existent. He magnified her inward resistance, but that did not lessen his satisfaction in the mastery of it.

CHAPTER XLV.

Behold my lady's carriage stop the way,
With powdered lacquey and with champing bay:
She sweeps the matting, treads the crimson stair,
Her arduous function solely "to be there."
Like Sirius rising o'er the silent sea,
She hides her heart in lustre loftily.

So the Grandcourts were in Grosvenor Square in time to receive a card for the musical party at Lady Mallinger's, there being reasons of business which made Sir Hugo know beforehand that his ill-beloved nephew was coming up. It was only the third evening after their arrival, and Gwendolen made rather an absent-minded acquaintance with her new ceilings and furniture, preoccupied with the certainty that she was going to speak to Deronda again, and also to see the Miss Lapidoth who had gone through so much, and was "capable of submitting to anything in the form of duty." For Gwendolen had remembered nearly every word that Deronda had said about Mirah, and especially that phrase, which she repeated to herself bitterly, having an ill-defined consciousness that her own submission was something very different. She would have been obliged

to allow, if any one had said it to her, that what she submitted to could not take the shape of duty, but was submission to a yoke drawn on her by an action she was ashamed of, and worn with a strength of selfish motives that left no weight for duty to carry.

The drawing-rooms in Park Lane, all white, gold, and pale crimson, were agreeably furnished, and not crowded with guests, before Mr and Mrs Grandcourt entered; and more than half an hour of instrumental music was being followed by an interval of movement and chat. Klesmer was there with his wife, and in his generous interest for Mirah he proposed to accompany her singing of Leo's "*O patria mia*," which he had before recommended her to choose, as more distinctive of her than better known music. He was already at the piano, and Mirah was standing there conspicuously, when Gwendolen, magnificent in her pale green velvet and poisoned diamonds, was ushered to a seat of honour well in view of them. With her long sight and self-command she had the rare power of quickly distinguishing persons and objects on entering a full room, and while turning her glance towards Mirah she did not neglect to exchange a bow and smile with Klesmer as she passed. The smile seemed to each a lightning-flash back on that morning when it had been her ambition to stand as the "little Jewess" was standing, and survey a grand audience from the higher rank of her talent—instead of which she was one of the ordinary crowd in silk and gems, whose utmost performance it must be to admire or find fault. "He

thinks I am in the right road now," said the lurking resentment within her.

Gwendolen had not caught sight of Deronda in her passage, and while she was seated acquitting herself in chat with Sir Hugo, she glanced round her with careful ease, bowing a recognition here and there, and fearful lest an anxious-looking exploration in search of Deronda might be observed by her husband, and afterwards rebuked as something "damnably vulgar." But all travelling, even that of a slow gradual glance round a room, brings a liability to undesired encounters, and amongst the eyes that met Gwendolen's, forcing her into a slight bow, were those of the "amateur too fond of Meyerbeer," Mr Lush, whom Sir Hugo continued to find useful as a half-caste among gentlemen. He was standing near her husband, who, however, turned a shoulder towards him, and was being understood to listen to Lord Pentreath. How was it that at this moment, for the first time, there darted through Gwendolen, like a disagreeable sensation, the idea that this man knew all about her husband's life? He had been banished from her sight, according to her will, and she had been satisfied; he had sunk entirely into the background of her thoughts, screened away from her by the agitating figures that kept up an inward drama in which Lush had no place. Here suddenly he reappeared at her husband's elbow, and there sprang up in her, like an instantaneously fabricated memory in a dream, the sense of his being connected with the secrets that made her wretched. She was conscious of effort in

turning her head away from him, trying to continue her wandering survey as if she had seen nothing of more consequence than the picture on the wall, till she discovered Deronda. But he was not looking towards her, and she withdrew her eyes from him, without having got any recognition, consoling herself with the assurance that he must have seen her come in. In fact, he was standing not far from the door with Hans Meyrick, whom he had been careful to bring into Lady Mallinger's list. They were both a little more anxious than was comfortable lest Mirah should not be heard to advantage. Deronda even felt himself on the brink of betraying emotion, Mirah's presence now being linked with crowding images of what had gone before and was to come after—all centring in the brother whom he was soon to reveal to her; and he had escaped as soon as he could from the side of Lady Pentreath, who had said in her violoncello voice—

"Well, your Jewess is pretty—there's no denying that. But where is her Jewish impudence? She looks as demure as a nun. I suppose she learned that on the stage."

He was beginning to feel on Mirah's behalf something of what he had felt for himself in his seraphic boyish time, when Sir Hugo asked him if he would like to be a great singer—an indignant dislike to her being remarked on in a free and easy way, as if she were an imported commodity disdainfully paid for by the fashionable public; and he winced the more because Mordecai, he knew, would feel that the name "Jewess" was taken as a sort of stamp

like the lettering of Chinese silk. In this susceptible mood he saw the Grandcourts enter, and was immediately appealed to by Hans about "that Vandyke duchess of a beauty." Pray excuse Deronda that in this moment he felt a transient renewal of his first repulsion from Gwendolen, as if she and her beauty and her failings were to blame for the undervaluing of Mirah as a woman—a feeling something like class animosity, which affection for what is not fully recognised by others, whether in persons or in poetry, rarely allows us to escape. To Hans admiring Gwendolen with his habitual hyperbole, he answered, with a sarcasm that was not quite good-humoured—

"I thought you could admire no style of woman but your Berenice."

"That is the style I worship—not admire," said Hans. "Other styles of woman I might make myself wicked for, but for Berenice I could make myself—well, pretty good, which is something much more difficult."

"Hush!" said Deronda, under the pretext that the singing was going to begin. He was not so delighted with the answer as might have been expected, and was relieved by Hans's movement to a more advanced spot.

Deronda had never before heard Mirah sing "*O patria mia.*" He knew well Leopardi's fine Ode to Italy (when Italy sat like a disconsolate mother in chains, hiding her face on her knees and weeping), and the few selected words were filled for him with the grandeur of the whole, which seemed to breathe as inspiration through the music. Mirah

singing this, made Mordecai more than ever one presence with her. Certain words not included in the song nevertheless rang within Deronda as harmonies from one invisible—

"Non ti difende
Nessun de' tuoi? L'armi, qua l'armi: io solo
Combatterò, procomberò sol io" *—

they seemed the very voice of that heroic passion which is falsely said to devote itself in vain when it achieves the godlike end of manifesting unselfish love. And that passion was present to Deronda now as the vivid image of a man dying helplessly away from the possibility of battle.

Mirah was equal to his wishes. While the general applause was sounding, Klesmer gave a more valued testimony, audible to her only—"Good, good—the crescendo better than before." But her chief anxiety was to know that she had satisfied Mr Deronda: any failure on her part this evening would have pained her as an especial injury to him. Of course all her prospects were due to what he had done for her; still this occasion of singing in the house that was his home brought a peculiar demand. She looked towards him in the distance, and he could see that she did; but he remained where he was, and watched the stream of emulous admirers closing round her, till presently they parted to make way for Gwendolen, who was taken up to be introduced by Mrs Klesmer. Easier now about "the little Jewess," Daniel relented towards poor Gwendolen in her

* Do none of thy children defend thee? Arms! bring me arms! alone I will fight, alone I will fall.

splendour, and his memory went back, with some penitence for his momentary hardness, over all the signs and confessions that she too needed a rescue, and one much more difficult than that of the wanderer by the river—a rescue for which he felt himself helpless. The silent question—"But is it not cowardly to make that a reason for turning away?" was the form in which he framed his resolve to go near her on the first opportunity, and show his regard for her past confidence, in spite of Sir Hugo's unwelcome hints.

Klesmer, having risen to Gwendolen as she approached, and being included by her in the opening conversation with Mirah, continued near them a little while, looking down with a smile, which was rather in his eyes than on his lips, at the piquant contrast of the two charming young creatures seated on the red divan. The solicitude seemed to be all on the side of the splendid one.

"You must let me say how much I am obliged to you," said Gwendolen. "I had heard from Mr Deronda that I should have a great treat in your singing, but I was too ignorant to imagine how great."

"You are very good to say so," answered Mirah, her mind chiefly occupied in contemplating Gwendolen. It was like a new kind of stage-experience to her to be close to genuine grand ladies with genuine brilliants and complexions, and they impressed her vaguely as coming out of some unknown drama, in which their parts perhaps got more tragic as they went on.

"We shall all want to learn of you—I, at least," said Gwendolen. "I sing very badly, as Herr Klesmer will tell you"—here she glanced upward to that higher power rather archly, and continued—"but I have been rebuked for not liking to be middling, since I can be nothing more. I think that is a different doctrine from yours?" She was still looking at Klesmer, who said quickly—

"Not if it means that it would be worth while for you to study further, and for Miss Lapidoth to have the pleasure of helping you." With that he moved away, and Mirah, taking everything with *naïve* seriousness, said—

"If you think I could teach you, I shall be very glad. I am anxious to teach, but I have only just begun. If I do it well, it must be by remembering how my master taught me."

Gwendolen was in reality too uncertain about herself to be prepared for this simple promptitude of Mirah's, and in her wish to change the subject, said, with some lapse from the good taste of her first address—

"You have not been long in London, I think? —but you were perhaps introduced to Mr Deronda abroad?"

"No," said Mirah; "I never saw him before I came to England in the summer."

"But he has seen you often and heard you sing a great deal, has he not?" said Gwendolen, led on partly by the wish to hear anything about Deronda, and partly by the awkwardness which besets the readiest person in carrying on a dialogue when empty of

matter. "He spoke of you to me with the highest praise. He seemed to know you quite well."

"Oh, I was poor and needed help," said Mirah, in a new tone of feeling, "and Mr Deronda has given me the best friends in the world. That is the only way he came to know anything about me —because he was sorry for me. I had no friends when I came. I was in distress. I owe everything to him."

Poor Gwendolen, who had wanted to be a struggling artist herself, could nevertheless not escape the impression that a mode of inquiry which would have been rather rude towards herself was an amiable condescension to this Jewess who was ready to give her lessons. The only effect on Mirah, as always on any mention of Deronda, was to stir reverential gratitude and anxiety that she should be understood to have the deepest obligation to him.

But both he and Hans, who were noticing the pair from a distance, would have felt rather indignant if they had known that the conversation had led up to Mirah's representation of herself in this light of neediness. In the movement that prompted her, however, there was an exquisite delicacy, which perhaps she could not have stated explicitly—the feeling that she ought not to allow any one to assume in Deronda a relation of more equality or less generous interest towards her than actually existed. Her answer was delightful to Gwendolen: she thought of nothing but the ready compassion which in another form she had trusted in and found for herself; and on the signals that Klesmer was

about to play she moved away in much content, entirely without presentiment that this Jewish *protégée* would ever make a more important difference in her life than the possible improvement of her singing—if the leisure and spirits of a Mrs Grandcourt would allow of other lessons than such as the world was giving her at rather a high charge.

With her wonted alternation from resolute care of appearances to some rash indulgence of an impulse, she chose, under the pretext of getting farther from the instrument, not to go again to her former seat, but placed herself on a settee where she could only have one neighbour. She was nearer to Deronda than before: was it surprising that he came up in time to shake hands before the music began—then, that after he had stood a little while by the elbow of the settee at the empty end, the torrent-like confluences of bass and treble seemed, like a convulsion of nature, to cast the conduct of petty mortals into insignificance, and to warrant his sitting down?

But when at the end of Klesmer's playing there came the outburst of talk under which Gwendolen had hoped to speak as she would to Deronda, she observed that Mr Lush was within hearing, leaning against the wall close by them. She could not help her flush of anger, but she tried to have only an air of polite indifference in saying—

"Miss Lapidoth is everything you described her to be."

"You have been very quick in discovering that," said Deronda, ironically.

"I have not found out all the excellences you

spoke of—I don't mean that," said Gwendolen; "but I think her singing is charming, and herself too. Her face is lovely—not in the least common; and she is such a complete little person. I should think she will be a great success."

This speech was grating to Deronda, and he would not answer it, but looked gravely before him. She knew that he was displeased with her, and she was getting so impatient under the neighbourhood of Mr Lush, which prevented her from saying any word she wanted to say, that she meditated some desperate step to get rid of it, and remained silent too. That constraint seemed to last a long while, neither Gwendolen nor Deronda looking at the other, till Lush slowly relieved the wall of his weight, and joined some one at a distance.

Gwendolen immediately said, "You despise me for talking artificially."

"No," said Deronda, looking at her coolly; "I think that is quite excusable sometimes. But I did not think what you were last saying was altogether artificial."

"There was something in it that displeased you," said Gwendolen. "What was it?"

"It is impossible to explain such things," said Deronda. "One can never communicate niceties of feeling about words and manner."

"You think I am shut out from understanding them," said Gwendolen, with a slight tremor in her voice, which she was trying to conquer. "Have I shown myself so very dense to everything you have said?" There was an indescribable look of sup-

pressed tears in her eyes, which were turned on him.

"Not at all," said Deronda, with some softening of voice. "But experience differs for different people. We don't all wince at the same things. I have had plenty of proof that you are not dense." He smiled at her.

"But one may feel things and not be able to do anything better for all that," said Gwendolen, not smiling in return—the distance to which Deronda's words seemed to throw her chilling her too much. "I begin to think we can only get better by having people about us who raise good feelings. You must not be surprised at anything in me. I think it is too late for me to alter. I don't know how to set about being wise, as you told me to be."

"I seldom find I do any good by my preaching. I might as well have kept from meddling," said Deronda, thinking rather sadly that his interference about that unfortunate necklace might end in nothing but an added pain to him in seeing her after all hardened to another sort of gambling than roulette.

"Don't say that," said Gwendolen, hurriedly, feeling that this might be her only chance of getting the words uttered, and dreading the increase of her own agitation. "If you despair of me, I shall despair. Your saying that I should not go on being selfish and ignorant has been some strength to me. If you say you wish you had not meddled —that means, you despair of me and forsake me. And then you will decide for me that I shall not be good. It is you who will decide; because you

might have made me different by keeping as near to me as you could, and believing in me."

She had not been looking at him as she spoke, but at the handle of the fan which she held closed. With the last words she rose and left him, returning to her former place, which had been left vacant; while every one was settling into quietude in expectation of Mirah's voice, which presently, with that wonderful, searching quality of subdued song in which the melody seems simply an effect of the emotion, gave forth, *Per pietà non dirmi addio.*

In Deronda's ear the strain was for the moment a continuance of Gwendolen's pleading—a painful urging of something vague and difficult, irreconcilable with pressing conditions, and yet cruel to resist. However strange the mixture in her of a resolute pride and a precocious air of knowing the world, with a precipitate, guileless indiscretion, he was quite sure now that the mixture existed. Sir Hugo's hints had made him alive to dangers that his own disposition might have neglected; but that Gwendolen's reliance on him was unvisited by any dream of his being a man who could misinterpret her was as manifest as morning, and made an appeal which wrestled with his sense of present dangers, and with his foreboding of a growing incompatible claim on him in her mind. There was a foreshadowing of some painful collision: on the one side the grasp of Mordecai's dying hand on him, with all the ideals and prospects it aroused; on the other this fair creature in silk and gems, with her hidden wound and her self-dread, making a trustful effort

to lean and find herself sustained. It was as if he had a vision of himself besought with outstretched arms and cries, while he was caught by the waves and compelled to mount the vessel bound for a far-off coast. That was the strain of excited feeling in him that went along with the notes of Mirah's song; but when it ceased he moved from his seat with the reflection that he had been falling into an exaggeration of his own importance, and a ridiculous readiness to accept Gwendolen's view of himself, as if he could really have any decisive power over her.

"What an enviable fellow you are," said Hans to him, "sitting on a sofa with that young duchess, and having an interesting quarrel with her!"

"Quarrel with her?" repeated Deronda, rather uncomfortably.

"Oh, about theology, of course; nothing personal. But she told you what you ought to think, and then left you with a grand air which was admirable. Is she an Antinomian?—if so, tell her I am an Antinomian painter, and introduce me. I should like to paint her and her husband. He has the sort of handsome *physique* that the Duke ought to have in *Lucrezia Borgia*—if it could go with a fine baritone, which it can't."

Deronda devoutly hoped that Hans's account of the impression his dialogue with Gwendolen had made on a distant beholder was no more than a bit of fantastic representation, such as was common with him.

And Gwendolen was not without her after-thoughts that her husband's eyes might have been on her, ex-

tracting something to reprove—some offence against her dignity as his wife; her consciousness telling her that she had not kept up the perfect air of equability in public which was her own ideal. But Grandcourt made no observation on her behaviour. All he said as they were driving home was—

"Lush will dine with us among the other people to-morrow. You will treat him civilly."

Gwendolen's heart began to beat violently. The words that she wanted to utter, as one wants to return a blow, were, "You are breaking your promise to me—the first promise you made me." But she dared not utter them. She was as frightened at a quarrel as if she had foreseen that it would end with throttling fingers on her neck. After a pause, she said in the tone rather of defeat than resentment—

"I thought you did not intend him to frequent the house again."

"I want him just now. He is useful to me; and he must be treated civilly."

Silence. There may come a moment when even an excellent husband who has dropt smoking under more or less of a pledge during courtship, for the first time will introduce his cigar-smoke between himself and his wife, with the tacit understanding that she will have to put up with it. Mr Lush was, so to speak, a very large cigar.

If these are the sort of lovers' vows at which Jove laughs, he must have a merry time of it.

CHAPTER XLVI

"If any one should importune me to give a reason why I loved him, I feel it could no otherwise be expressed than by making answer, 'Because it was he; because it was I.' There is, beyond what I am able to say, I know not what inexplicable and inevitable power that brought on this union."—MONTAIGNE: *On Friendship.*

THE time had come to prepare Mordecai for the revelation of the restored sister and for the change of abode which was desirable before Mirah's meeting with her brother. Mrs Meyrick, to whom Deronda had confided everything except Mordecai's peculiar relation to himself, had been active in helping him to find a suitable lodging in Brompton, not many minutes' walk from her own house, so that the brother and sister would be within reach of her motherly care. Her happy mixture of Scottish caution with her Scottish fervour and Gallic liveliness had enabled her to keep the secret close from the girls as well as from Hans, any betrayal to them being likely to reach Mirah in some way that would raise an agitating suspicion, and spoil the important opening of that work which was to secure her independence, as we rather arbitrarily call one of the more arduous and dignified forms of our dependence. And

both Mrs Meyrick and Deronda had more reasons than they could have expressed for desiring that Mirah should be able to maintain herself. Perhaps "the little mother" was rather helped in her secrecy by some dubiousness in her sentiment about the remarkable brother described to her; and certainly, if she felt any joy and anticipatory admiration, it was due to her faith in Deronda's judgment. The consumption was a sorrowful fact that appealed to her tenderness; but how was she to be very glad of an enthusiasm which, to tell the truth, she could only contemplate as Jewish pertinacity, and as rather an undesirable introduction among them all of a man whose conversation would not be more modern and encouraging than that of Scott's Covenanters? Her mind was anything but prosaic, and she had her soberer share of Mab's delight in the romance of Mirah's story and of her abode with them; but the romantic or unusual in real life requires some adaptation. We sit up at night to read about Sakya-Mouni, Saint Francis, or Oliver Cromwell; but whether we should be glad for any one at all like them to call on us the next morning, still more, to reveal himself as a new relation, is quite another affair. Besides, Mrs Meyrick had hoped, as her children did, that the intensity of Mirah's feeling about Judaism would slowly subside, and be merged in the gradually deepening current of loving interchange with her new friends. In fact, her secret favourite continuation of the romance had been no discovery of Jewish relations, but something much more favourable to the hopes she discerned in Hans. And now

—here was a brother who would dip Mirah's mind over again in the deepest dye of Jewish sentiment. She could not help saying to Deronda—

"I am as glad as you are that the pawnbroker is not her brother: there are Ezras and Ezras in the world; and really it is a comfort to think that all Jews are not like those shopkeepers who *will not* let you get out of their shops; and besides, what he said to you about his mother and sister makes me bless him. I am sure he's good. But I never did like anything fanatical. I suppose I heard a little too much preaching in my youth, and lost my palate for it."

"I don't think you will find that Mordecai obtrudes any preaching," said Deronda. "He is not what I should call fanatical. I call a man fanatical when his enthusiasm is narrow and hoodwinked, so that he has no sense of proportions, and becomes unjust and unsympathetic to men who are out of his own track. Mordecai is an enthusiast: I should like to keep that word for the highest order of minds—those who care supremely for grand and general benefits to mankind. He is not a strictly orthodox Jew, and is full of allowances for others: his conformity in many things is an allowance for the condition of other Jews. The people he lives with are as fond of him as possible, and they can't in the least understand his ideas."

"Oh, well, I can live up to the level of the pawnbroker's mother, and like him for what I see to be good in him; and for what I don't see the merits of I will take your word. According to your def-

inition, I suppose one might be fanatical in worshipping common-sense; for my husband used to say the world would be a poor place if there were nothing but common-sense in it. However, Mirah's brother will have good bedding—that I have taken care of; and I shall have this extra window pasted up with paper to prevent draughts." (The conversation was taking place in the destined lodging.) "It is a comfort to think that the people of the house are no strangers to me — no hypocritical harpies. And when the children know, we shall be able to make the rooms much prettier."

"The next stage of the affair is to tell all to Mordecai, and get him to move—which may be a more difficult business," said Deronda.

"And will you tell Mirah before I say anything to the children?" said Mrs Meyrick. But Deronda hesitated, and she went on in a tone of persuasive deliberation—"No, I think not. Let me tell Hans and the girls the evening before, and they will be away the next morning."

"Yes, that will be best. But do justice to my account of Mordecai—or Ezra, as I suppose Mirah will wish to call him: don't assist their imagination by referring to Habakkuk Mucklewrath," said Deronda, smiling, — Mrs Meyrick herself having used the comparison of the Covenanters.

"Trust me, trust me," said the little mother. "I shall have to persuade them so hard to be glad, that I shall convert myself. When I am frightened I find it a good thing to have somebody to be angry with for not being brave: it warms the blood."

Deronda might have been more argumentative or persuasive about the view to be taken of Mirah's brother, if he had been less anxiously preoccupied with the more important task immediately before him, which he desired to acquit himself of without wounding the Cohens. Mordecai, by a memorable answer, had made it evident that he would be keenly alive to any inadvertence in relation to their feelings. In the interval, he had been meeting Mordecai at the *Hand and Banner*, but now after due reflection he wrote to him saying that he had particular reasons for wishing to see him in his own home the next evening, and would beg to sit with him in his workroom for an hour, if the Cohens would not regard it as an intrusion. He would call with the understanding that if there were any objection, Mordecai would accompany him elsewhere. Deronda hoped in this way to create a little expectation that would have a preparatory effect.

He was received with the usual friendliness, some additional costume in the women and children, and in all the elders a slight air of wondering which even in Cohen was not allowed to pass the bounds of silence—the guest's transactions with Mordecai being a sort of mystery which he was rather proud to think lay outside the sphere of light which enclosed his own understanding. But when Deronda said, "I suppose Mordecai is at home and expecting me," Jacob, who had profited by the family remarks, went up to his knee and said, "What do you want to talk to Mordecai about?"

"Something that is very interesting to him," said

Deronda, pinching the lad's ear, "but that you can't understand."

"Can you say this?" said Jacob, immediately giving forth a string of his rote-learned Hebrew verses with a wonderful mixture of the throaty and the nasal, and nodding his small head at his hearer, with a sense of giving formidable evidence which might rather alter their mutual position.

"No, really," said Deronda, keeping grave; "I can't say anything like it."

"I thought not," said Jacob, performing a dance of triumph with his small scarlet legs, while he took various objects out of the deep pockets of his knickerbockers and returned them thither, as a slight hint of his resources; after which running to the door of the workroom, he opened it wide, set his back against it, and said, "Mordecai, here's the young swell"—a copying of his father's phrase which seemed to him well fitted to cap the recitation of Hebrew.

He was called back with hushes by mother and grandmother, and Deronda, entering and closing the door behind him, saw that a bit of carpet had been laid down, a chair placed, and the fire and lights attended to, in sign of the Cohens' respect. As Mordecai rose to greet him, Deronda was struck with the air of solemn expectation in his face, such as would have seemed perfectly natural if his letter had declared that some revelation was to be made about the lost sister. Neither of them spoke, till Deronda, with his usual tenderness of manner, had drawn the vacant chair from the opposite side of

the hearth and had seated himself near to Mordecai, who then said, in a tone of fervid certainty—

"You are come to tell me something that my soul longs for."

"It is true that I have something very weighty to tell you—something, I trust, that you will rejoice in," said Deronda, on his guard against the probability that Mordecai had been preparing himself for something quite different from the fact.

"It is all revealed—it is made clear to you," said Mordecai, more eagerly, leaning forward with clasped hands. "You are even as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother—the heritage is yours—there is no doubt to divide us."

"I have learned nothing new about myself," said Deronda. The disappointment was inevitable: it was better not to let the feeling be strained longer in a mistaken hope.

Mordecai sank back in his chair, unable for the moment to care what was really coming. The whole day his mind had been in a state of tension towards one fulfilment. The reaction was sickening, and he closed his eyes.

"Except," Deronda went on gently after a pause, —"except that I had really some time ago come into another sort of hidden connection with you, besides what you have spoken of as existing in your own feeling."

The eyes were not opened, but there was a fluttering in the lids.

"I had made the acquaintance of one in whom you are interested."

Mordecai opened his eyes and fixed them in a quiet gaze on Deronda: the former painful check repressed all activity of conjecture.

"One who is closely related to your departed mother," Deronda went on, wishing to make the disclosure gradual; but noticing a shrinking movement in Mordecai, he added—"whom she and you held dear above all others."

Mordecai, with a sudden start, laid a spasmodic grasp on Deronda's wrist; there was a great terror in him. And Deronda divined it. A tremor was perceptible in his clear tones as he said—

"What was prayed for has come to pass: Mirah has been delivered from evil."

Mordecai's grasp relaxed a little, but he was panting with a sort of tearless sob.

Deronda went on: "Your sister is worthy of the mother you honoured."

He waited there, and Mordecai, throwing himself backward in his chair, again closed his eyes, uttering himself almost inaudibly for some minutes in Hebrew, and then subsiding into a happy-looking silence. Deronda, watching the expression in his uplifted face, could have imagined that he was speaking with some beloved object: there was a new suffused sweetness, something like that on the faces of the beautiful dead. For the first time Deronda thought he discerned a family resemblance to Mirah.

Presently, when Mordecai was ready to listen, the rest was told. But in accounting for Mirah's flight he made the statements about the father's conduct as vague as he could, and threw the emphasis on

her yearning to come to England as the place where she might find her mother. Also he kept back the fact of Mirah's intention to drown herself, and his own part in rescuing her; merely describing the home she had found with friends of his, whose interest in her and efforts for her he had shared. What he dwelt on finally was Mirah's feeling about her mother and brother; and in relation to this he tried to give every detail.

"It was in search of them," said Deronda, smiling, "that I turned into this house: the name Ezra Cohen was just then the most interesting name in the world to me. I confess I had a fear for a long while. Perhaps you will forgive me now for having asked you that question about the elder Mrs Cohen's daughter. I cared very much what I should find Mirah's friends to be. But I had found a brother worthy of her when I knew that her Ezra was disguised under the name of Mordecai."

"Mordecai is really my name—Ezra Mordecai Cohen."

"Is there any kinship between this family and yours?" said Deronda.

"Only the kinship of Israel. My soul clings to these people, who have sheltered me and given me succour out of the affection that abides in Jewish hearts, as a sweet odour in things long crushed and hidden from the outer air. It is good for me to bear with their ignorance and be bound to them in gratitude, that I may keep in mind the spiritual poverty of the Jewish million, and not put impatient knowledge in the stead of loving wisdom."

"But you don't feel bound to continue with them now there is a closer tie to draw you?" said Deronda, not without fear that he might find an obstacle to overcome. "It seems to me right now—is it not?—that you should live with your sister; and I have prepared a home to take you to in the neighbourhood of her friends, that she may join you there. Pray grant me this wish. It will enable me to be with you often in the hours when Mirah is obliged to leave you. That is my selfish reason. But the chief reason is, that Mirah will desire to watch over you, and that you ought to give to her the guardianship of a brother's presence. You shall have books about you. I shall want to learn of you, and to take you out to see the river and trees. And you will have the rest and comfort that you will be more and more in need of—nay, that I need for you. This is the claim I make on you, now that we have found each other."

Deronda spoke in a tone of earnest affectionate pleading, such as he might have used to a venerated elder brother. Mordecai's eyes were fixed on him with a listening contemplation, and he was silent for a little while after Deronda had ceased to speak. Then he said, with an almost reproachful emphasis—

"And you would have me hold it doubtful whether you were born a Jew! Have we not from the first touched each other with invisible fibres—have we not quivered together like the leaves from a common stem with stirrings from a common root? I know what I am outwardly—I am one among the crowd

of poor—I am stricken, I am dying. But our souls know each other. They gazed in silence as those who have long been parted and meet again, but when they found voice they were assured, and all their speech is understanding. The life of Israel is in your veins."

Deronda sat perfectly still, but felt his face tingling. It was impossible either to deny or assent. He waited, hoping that Mordecai would presently give him a more direct answer. And after a pause of meditation he did say firmly—

"What you wish of me I will do. And our mother —may the blessing of the Eternal be with her in our souls!—would have wished it too. I will accept what your loving-kindness has prepared, and Mirah's home shall be mine." He paused a moment, and then added in a more melancholy tone, "But I shall grieve to part from these parents and the little ones. You must tell them, for my heart would fail me."

"I felt that you would want me to tell them. Shall we go now at once?" said Deronda, much relieved by this unwavering compliance.

"Yes; let us not defer it. It must be done," said Mordecai, rising with the air of a man who has to perform a painful duty. Then came, as an afterthought, "But do not dwell on my sister more than is needful."

When they entered the parlour he said to the alert Jacob, "Ask your father to come, and tell Sarah to mind the shop. My friend has something to say," he continued, turning to the elder Mrs

Cohen. It seemed part of Mordecai's eccentricity that he should call this gentleman his friend; and the two women tried to show their better manners by warm politeness in begging Deronda to seat himself in the best place.

When Cohen entered with a pen behind his ear, he rubbed his hands and said with loud satisfaction, "Well, sir! I'm glad you're doing us the honour to join our family party again. We are pretty comfortable, I think."

He looked round with shiny gladness. And when all were seated on the hearth the scene was worth peeping in upon: on one side Baby under her scarlet quilt in the corner being rocked by the young mother, and Adelaide Rebekah seated on the grandmother's knee; on the other, Jacob between his father's legs; while the two markedly different figures of Deronda and Mordecai were in the middle — Mordecai a little backward in the shade, anxious to conceal his agitated susceptibility to what was going on around him. The chief light came from the fire, which brought out the rich colour on a depth of shadow, and seemed to turn into speech the dark gems of eyes that looked at each other kindly.

"I have just been telling Mordecai of an event that makes a great change in his life," Deronda began, "but I hope you will agree with me that it is a joyful one. Since he thinks of you as his best friends, he wishes me to tell you for him at once."

"Relations with money, sir?" burst in Cohen,

feeling a power of divination which it was a pity to nullify by waiting for the fact.

"No; not exactly," said Deronda, smiling. "But a very precious relation wishes to be reunited to him —a very good and lovely young sister, who will care for his comfort in every way."

"Married, sir?"

"No, not married."

"But with a maintenance?"

"With talents which will secure her a maintenance. A home is already provided for Mordecai."

There was silence for a moment or two before the grandmother said in a wailing tone—

"Well, well! and so you're going away from us, Mordecai."

"And where there's no children as there is here," said the mother, catching the wail.

"No Jacob, and no Adelaide, and no Eugenie!" wailed the grandmother again.

"Ay, ay, Jacob's learning 'ill all wear out of him. He must go to school. It'll be hard times for Jacob," said Cohen, in a tone of decision.

In the wide-open ears of Jacob his father's words sounded like a doom, giving an awful finish to the dirge-like effect of the whole announcement. His face had been gathering a wondering incredulous sorrow at the notion of Mordecai's going away: he was unable to imagine the change as anything lasting; but at the mention of "hard times for Jacob" there was no further suspense of feeling, and he broke forth in loud lamentation. Adelaide Rebekah always cried when her brother cried, and

now began to howl with astonishing suddenness, whereupon baby awaking contributed angry screams, and required to be taken out of the cradle. A great deal of hushing was necessary, and Mordecai, feeling the cries pierce him, put out his arms to Jacob, who in the midst of his tears and sobs was turning his head right and left for general observation. His father, who had been saying, "Never mind, old man; you shall go to the riders," now released him, and he went to Mordecai, who clasped him, and laid his cheek on the little black head without speaking. But Cohen, sensible that the master of the family must make some apology for all this weakness, and that the occasion called for a speech, addressed Deronda with some elevation of pitch, squaring his elbows and resting a hand on each knee:—

"It's not as we're the people to grudge anybody's good luck, sir, or the portion of their cup being made fuller, as I may say. I'm not an envious man, and if anybody offered to set up Mordecai in a shop of my sort two doors lower down, *I* shouldn't make wry faces about it. I'm not one of them that had need have a poor opinion of themselves, and be frightened at anybody else getting a chance. If I'm offal, let a wise man come and tell me, for I've never heard it yet. And in point of business, I'm not a class of goods to be in danger. If anybody takes to rolling me, I can pack myself up like a caterpillar, and find my feet when I'm let alone. And though, as I may say, you're taking some of our good works from us, which is a property bearing interest, I'm not saying but we can afford that,

though my mother and my wife had the good will to wish and do for Mordecai to the last; and a Jew must not be like a servant who works for reward—though I see nothing against a reward if I can get it. And as to the extra outlay in schooling, I'm neither poor nor greedy—I wouldn't hang myself for sixpence, nor half a crown neither. But the truth of it is, the women and children are fond of Mordecai. You may partly see how it is, sir, by your own sense. A Jewish man is bound to thank God, day by day, that he was not made a woman; but a woman has to thank God that He has made her according to His will. And we all know what He has made her — a child-bearing, tender-hearted thing is the woman of our people. Her children are mostly stout, as I think you'll say Addy's are, and she's not mushy, but her heart is tender. So you must excuse present company, sir, for not being glad all at once. And as to this young lady—for by what you say 'young lady' is the proper term"—Cohen here threw some additional emphasis into his look and tone—"we shall all be glad for Mordecai's sake by-and-by, when we cast up our accounts and see where we are."

Before Deronda could summon any answer to this oddly mixed speech, Mordecai exclaimed—

"Friends, friends! For food and raiment and shelter I would not have sought better than you have given me. You have sweetened the morsel with love; and what I thought of as a joy that would be left to me even in the last months of my waning strength was to go on teaching the lad. But

now I am as one who had clad himself beforehand in his shroud, and used himself to making the grave his bed, when the divine command sounded in his ears, 'Arise, and go forth; the night is not yet come.' For no light matter would I have turned away from your kindness to take another's. But it has been taught us, as you know, that *the reward of one duty is the power to fulfil another*—so said Ben Azai. You have made your duty to one of the poor among your brethren a joy to you and me; and your reward shall be that you will not rest without the joy of like deeds in the time to come. And may not Jacob come and visit me?"

Mordecai had turned with this question to Deronda, who said—

"Surely that can be managed. It is no further than Brompton."

Jacob, who had been gradually calmed by the need to hear what was going forward, began now to see some daylight on the future, the word "visit" having the lively charm of cakes and general relaxation at his grandfather's, the dealer in knives. He danced away from Mordecai, and took up a station of survey in the middle of the hearth with his hands in his knickerbockers.

"Well," said the grandmother, with a sigh of resignation, "I hope there'll be nothing in the way of your getting *kosher* meat, Mordecai. For you'll have to trust to those you live with."

"That's all right, that's all right, you may be sure, mother," said Cohen, as if anxious to cut off inquiry on matters in which he was uncertain of

the guest's position. "So, sir," he added, turning with a look of amused enlightenment to Deronda, "it was better than learning you had to talk to Mordecai about! I wondered to myself at the time. I thought somehow there was a something."

"Mordecai will perhaps explain to you how it was that I was seeking him," said Deronda, feeling that he had better go, and rising as he spoke.

It was agreed that he should come again and the final move be made on the next day but one; but when he was going Mordecai begged to walk with him to the end of the street, and wrapped himself in coat and comforter. It was a March evening, and Deronda did not mean to let him go far, but he understood the wish to be outside the house with him in communicative silence, after the exciting speech that had been filling the last hour. No word was spoken until Deronda had proposed parting, when he said—

"Mirah would wish to thank the Cohens for their goodness. You would wish her to do so—to come and see them, would you not?"

Mordecai did not answer immediately, but at length said—

"I cannot tell. I fear not. There is a family sorrow, and the sight of my sister might be to them as the fresh bleeding of wounds. There is a daughter and sister who will never be restored as Mirah is. But who knows the pathways? We are all of us denying or fulfilling prayers—and men in their careless deeds walk amidst invisible outstretched arms

and pleadings made in vain. In my ears I have the prayers of generations past and to come. My life is as nothing to me but the beginning of fulfilment. And yet I am only another prayer—which you will fulfil."

Deronda pressed his hand, and they parted.

CHAPTER XLVII.

"And you must love him ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love."
—WORDSWORTH.

ONE might be tempted to envy Deronda providing new clothes for Mordecai, and pleasing himself as if he were sketching a picture in imagining the effect of the fine grey flannel shirts and a dressing-gown very much like a Franciscan's brown frock, with Mordecai's head and neck above them. Half his pleasure was the sense of seeing Mirah's brother through her eyes, and securing her fervid joy from any perturbing impression. And yet, after he had made all things ready, he was visited with a doubt whether he were not mistaking her, and putting the lower effect for the higher: was she not just as capable as he himself had been of feeling the impressive distinction in her brother all the more for that aspect of poverty which was among the memorials of his past? But there were the Meyricks to be propitiated towards this too Judaic brother; and Deronda detected himself piqued into getting out of sight everything that might feed the ready repug-

nance in minds unblessed with that "precious seeing," that bathing of all objects in a solemnity as of sunset-glow, which is begotten of a loving reverential emotion.

And his inclination would have been the more confirmed if he had heard the dialogue round Mrs Meyrick's fire late in the evening, after Mirah had gone to her room. Hans, settled now in his Chelsea rooms, had stayed late, and Mrs Meyrick, poking the fire into a blaze, said—

"Now, Kate, put out your candle, and all come round the fire cosily. Hans, dear, do leave off laughing at those poems for the ninety-ninth time, and come too. I have something wonderful to tell you."

"As if I didn't know that, ma. I have seen it in the corner of your eye ever so long, and in your pretence of errands," said Kate, while the girls came to put their feet on the fender, and Hans, pushing his chair near them, sat astride it, resting his fists and chin on the back.

"Well, then, if you are so wise, perhaps you know that Mirah's brother is found!" said Mrs Meyrick, in her clearest accents.

"Oh, confound it!" said Hans, in the same moment.

"Hans, that is wicked," said Mab. "Suppose we had lost you."

"I *can not* help being rather sorry," said Kate. "And her mother?—where is she?"

"Her mother is dead."

"I hope the brother is not a bad man," said Amy.

"Nor a fellow all smiles and jewellery—a Crystal Palace Assyrian with a hat on," said Hans, in the worst humour.

"Were there ever such unfeeling children?" said Mrs Meyrick, a little strengthened by the need for opposition. "You don't think the least bit of Mirah's joy in the matter."

"You know, ma, Mirah hardly remembers her brother," said Kate.

"People who are lost for twelve years should never come back again," said Hans. "They are always in the way."

"Hans!" said Mrs Meyrick, reproachfully. "If you had lost me for *twenty* years, I should have thought——"

"I said twelve years," Hans broke in. "Anywhere about twelve years is the time at which lost relations should keep out of the way."

"Well, but it's nice finding people—there is something to tell," said Mab, clasping her knees. "Did Prince Camaralzaman find him?"

Then Mrs Meyrick, in her neat narrative way, told all she knew without interruption. "Mr Deronda has the highest admiration for him," she ended —"seems quite to look up to him. And he says Mirah is just the sister to understand this brother."

"Deronda is getting perfectly preposterous about those Jews," said Hans with disgust, rising and setting his chair away with a bang. "He wants to do everything he can to encourage Mirah in her prejudices."

"Oh, for shame, Hans!—to speak in that way

of Mr Deronda," said Mab. And Mrs Meyrick's face showed something like an under-current of expression, not allowed to get to the surface.

"And now we shall never be all together," Hans went on, walking about with his hands thrust into the pockets of his brown velveteen coat, "but we must have this prophet Elijah to tea with us, and Mirah will think of nothing but sitting on the ruins of Jerusalem. She will be spoiled as an artist—mind that—she will get as narrow as a nun. Everything will be spoiled—our home and everything. I shall take to drinking."

"Oh, really, Hans," said Kate, impatiently, "I do think men are the most contemptible animals in all creation. Every one of them must have everything to his mind, else he is unbearable."

"Oh, oh, oh, it's very dreadful!" cried Mab. "I feel as if ancient Nineveh were come again."

"I should like to know what is the good of having gone to the university and knowing everything, if you are so childish, Hans," said Amy. "You ought to put up with a man that Providence sends you to be kind to. *We* shall have to put up with him."

"I hope you will all of you like the new Lamentations of Jeremiah—'to be continued in our next'—that's all," said Hans, seizing his wide-awake. "It's no use being one thing more than another if one has to endure the company of those men with a fixed idea—staring blankly at you, and requiring all your remarks to be small footnotes to their text. If you're to be under a petrifying

well, you'd better be an old boot. I don't feel myself an old boot." Then abruptly, "Good-night, little mother," bending to kiss her brow in a hasty, desperate manner, and condescendingly, on his way to the door, "Good-night, girls."

"Suppose Mirah knew how you are behaving," said Kate. But her answer was a slam of the door. "I *should* like to see Mirah when Mr Deronda tells her," she went on, to her mother. "I know she will look so beautiful."

But Deronda on second thoughts had written a letter which Mrs Meyrick received the next morning, begging her to make the revelation instead of waiting for him, not giving the real reason—that he shrank from going again through a narrative in which he seemed to be making himself important, and giving himself a character of general beneficence—but saying that he wished to remain with Mordecai while Mrs Meyrick would bring Mirah on what was to be understood as a visit, so that there might be a little interval before that change of abode which he expected that Mirah herself would propose.

Deronda secretly felt some wondering anxiety how far Mordecai, after years of solitary preoccupation with ideas likely to have become the more exclusive from continual diminution of bodily strength, would allow him to feel a tender interest in his sister over and above the rendering of pious duties. His feeling for the Cohens, and especially for little Jacob, showed a persistent activity of affection; but those objects had entered into his daily life

for years; and Deronda felt it noticeable that Mordecai asked no new questions about Mirah, maintaining, indeed, an unusual silence on all subjects, and appearing simply to submit to the changes that were coming over his personal life. He donned his new clothes obediently, but said afterwards to Deronda, with a faint smile, "I must keep my old garments by me for a remembrance." And when they were seated, awaiting Mirah, he uttered no word, keeping his eyelids closed, but yet showing restless feeling in his face and hands. In fact, Mordecai was undergoing that peculiar nervous perturbation only known to those whose minds, long and habitually moving with strong impetus in one current, are suddenly compelled into a new or reopened channel. Susceptible people whose strength has been long absorbed by a dominant bias dread an interview that imperiously revives the past, as they would dread a threatening illness. Joy may be there, but joy, too, is terrible.

Deronda felt the infection of excitement, and when he heard the ring at the door, he went out not knowing exactly why, that he might see and greet Mirah beforehand. He was startled to find that she had on the hat and cloak in which he had first seen her—the memorable cloak that had once been wetted for a winding-sheet. She had come down-stairs equipped in this way, and when Mrs Meyrick said, in a tone of question, "You like to go in that dress, dear?" she answered, "My brother is poor, and I want to look as much like him as I can, else he may feel distant from me"

—imagining that she should meet him in the workman's dress. Deronda could not make any remark, but felt secretly rather ashamed of his own fastidious arrangements. They shook hands silently, for Mirah looked pale and awed.

When Deronda opened the door for her, Mordecai had risen, and had his eyes turned towards it with an eager gaze. Mirah took only two or three steps, and then stood still. They looked at each other, motionless. It was less their own presence that they felt than another's; they were meeting first in memories, compared with which touch was no union. Mirah was the first to break the silence, standing where she was.

"Ezra," she said, in exactly the same tone as when she was telling of her mother's call to him.

Mordecai with a sudden movement advanced and laid his hands on her shoulders. He was the head taller, and looked down at her tenderly while he said, "That was our mother's voice. You remember her calling me?"

"Yes, and how you answered her—'Mother!' —and I knew you loved her." Mirah threw her arms round her brother's neck, clasped her little hands behind it, and drew down his face, kissing it with childlike lavishness. Her hat fell backward on the ground and disclosed all her curls.

"Ah, the dear head, the dear head!" said Mordecai, in a low loving tone, laying his thin hand gently on the curls.

"You are very ill, Ezra," said Mirah, sadly looking at him with more observation.

"Yes, dear child, I shall not be long with you in the body," was the quiet answer.

"Oh, I will love you and we will talk to each other," said Mirah, with a sweet outpouring of her words, as spontaneous as bird-notes. "I will tell you everything, and you will teach me:—you will teach me to be a good Jewess—what she would have liked me to be. I shall always be with you when I am not working. For I work now. I shall get money to keep us. Oh, I have had such good friends."

Mirah until now had quite forgotten that any one was by, but here she turned with the prettiest attitude, keeping one hand on her brother's arm while she looked at Mrs Meyrick and Deronda. The little mother's happy emotion in witnessing this meeting of brother and sister had already won her to Mordecai, who seemed to her really to have more dignity and refinement than she had felt obliged to believe in from Deronda's account.

"See this dear lady!" said Mirah. "I was a stranger, a poor wanderer, and she believed in me, and has treated me as a daughter. Please give my brother your hand," she added, beseechingly, taking Mrs Meyrick's hand and putting it in Mordecai's, then pressing them both with her own and lifting them to her lips.

"The Eternal Goodness has been with you," said Mordecai. "You have helped to fulfil our mother's prayer."

"I think we will go now, shall we?—and return later," said Deronda, laying a gentle pressure on

Mrs Meyrick's arm, and she immediately complied. He was afraid of any reference to the facts about himself which he had kept back from Mordecai, and he felt no uneasiness now in the thought of the brother and sister being alone together.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

'Tis a hard and ill-paid task to order all things beforehand by the rule of our own security, as is well hinted by Machiavelli concerning Cæsar Borgia, who, saith he, had thought of all that might occur on his father's death, and had provided against every evil chance save only one: it had never come into his mind that when his father died, his own death would quickly follow.

GRANDCOURT'S importance as a subject of this realm was of the grandly passive kind which consists in the inheritance of land. Political and social movements touched him only through the wire of his rental, and his most careful biographer need not have read up on Schleswig-Holstein, the policy of Bismarck, trade-unions, household suffrage, or even the last commercial panic. He glanced over the best newspaper columns on these topics, and his views on them can hardly be said to have wanted breadth, since he embraced all Germans, all commercial men, and all voters liable to use the wrong kind of soap, under the general epithet of "brutes;" but he took no action on these much agitated questions beyond looking from under his eyelids at any man who mentioned them, and retaining a silence which served to shake the opinions of timid thinkers.

But Grandcourt within his own sphere of interest

showed some of the qualities which have entered into triumphal diplomacy of the widest continental sort.

No movement of Gwendolen in relation to Deronda escaped him. He would have denied that he was jealous; because jealousy would have implied some doubt of his own power to hinder what he had determined against. That his wife should have more inclination to another man's society than to his own would not pain him: what he required was that she should be as fully aware as she would have been of a locked hand-cuff, that her inclination was helpless to decide anything in contradiction with his resolve. However much of vacillating whim there might have been in his entrance on matrimony, there was no vacillating in his interpretation of the bond. He had not repented of his marriage; it had really brought more of aim into his life, new objects to exert his will upon; and he had not repented of his choice. His taste was fastidious, and Gwendolen satisfied it: he would not have liked a wife who had not received some elevation of rank from him; nor one who did not command admiration by her mien and beauty; nor one whose nails were not of the right shape; nor one the lobe of whose ear was at all too large and red; nor one who, even if her nails and ears were right, was at the same time a ninny, unable to make spirited answers. These requirements may not seem too exacting to refined contemporaries whose own ability to fall in love has been held in suspense for lack of indispensable details; but fewer perhaps may follow him in his con-

tentment that his wife should be in a temper which would dispose her to fly out if she dared, and that she should have been urged into marrying him by other feelings than passionate attachment. Still, for those who prefer command to love, one does not see why the habit of mind should change precisely at the point of matrimony.

Grandcourt did not feel that he had chosen the wrong wife; and having taken on himself the part of husband, he was not going in any way to be fooled, or allow himself to be seen in a light that could be regarded as pitiable. This was his state of mind—not jealousy; still, his behaviour in some respects was as like jealousy as yellow is to yellow, which colour we know may be the effect of very different causes.

He had come up to town earlier than usual because he wished to be on the spot for legal consultation as to the arrangements of his will, the transference of mortgages, and that transaction with his uncle about the succession to Diplow, which the bait of ready money, adroitly dangled without importunity, had finally won him to agree upon. But another acceptable accompaniment of his being in town was the presentation of himself with the beautiful bride whom he had chosen to marry in spite of what other people might have expected of him. It is true that Grandcourt went about with the sense that he did not care a languid curse for any one's admiration; but this state of not-caring, just as much as desire, required its related object—namely, a world of admiring or envying

spectators: for if you are fond of looking stonily at smiling persons, the persons must be there and they must smile — a rudimentary truth which is surely forgotten by those who complain of mankind as generally contemptible, since any other aspect of the race must disappoint the voracity of their contempt. Grandcourt, in town for the first time with his wife, had his non-caring abstinence from curses enlarged and diversified by splendid receptions, by conspicuous rides and drives, by presentations of himself with her on all distinguished occasions. He wished her to be sought after; he liked that "fellows" should be eager to talk with her and escort her within his observation; there was even a kind of lofty coquetry on her part that he would not have objected to. But what he did not like were her ways in relation to Deronda.

After the musical party at Lady Mallinger's, when Grandcourt had observed the dialogue on the settee as keenly as Hans had done, it was characteristic of him that he named Deronda for invitation along with the Mallingers, tenaciously avoiding the possible suggestion to anybody concerned that Deronda's presence or absence could be of the least importance to him; and he made no direct observation to Gwendolen on her behaviour that evening, lest the expression of his disgust should be a little too strong to satisfy his own pride. But a few days afterwards he remarked, without being careful of the *à propos*—

"Nothing makes a woman more of a gawky than looking out after people and showing tempers in

public. A woman ought to have fine manners. Else it's intolerable to appear with her."

Gwendolen made the expected application, and was not without alarm at the notion of being a gawky. For she, too, with her melancholy distaste for things, preferred that her distaste should include admirers. But the sense of overhanging rebuke only intensified the strain of expectation towards any meeting with Deronda. The novelty and excitement of her town life was like the hurry and constant change of foreign travel: whatever might be the inward despondency, there was a programme to be fulfilled, not without gratification to many-sided self. But, as always happens with a deep interest, the comparatively rare occasions on which she could exchange any words with Deronda had a diffusive effect in her consciousness, magnifying their communication with each other, and therefore enlarging the place she imagined it to have in his mind. How could Deronda help this? He certainly did not avoid her; rather he wished to convince her by every delicate indirect means that her confidence in him had not been indiscreet, since it had not lowered his respect. Moreover, he liked being near her—how could it be otherwise? She was something more than a problem: she was a lovely woman, for the turn of whose mind and fate he had a care which, however futile it might be, kept soliciting him as a responsibility, perhaps all the more that, when he dared to think of his own future, he saw it lying far away from this splendid sad-hearted creature, who, because

he had once been impelled to arrest her attention momentarily, as he might have seized her arm with warning to hinder her from stepping where there was danger, had turned to him with a beseeching persistent need.

One instance in which Grandcourt stimulated a feeling in Gwendolen that he would have liked to suppress without seeming to care about it, had relation to Mirah. Gwendolen's inclination lingered over the project of the singing lessons as a sort of obedience to Deronda's advice, but day followed day with that want of perceived leisure which belongs to lives where there is no work to mark off intervals; and the continual liability to Grandcourt's presence and surveillance seemed to flatten every effort to the level of the boredom which his manner expressed: his negative mind was as diffusive as fog, clinging to all objects, and spoiling all contact.

But one morning when they were breakfasting, Gwendolen, in a recurrent fit of determination to exercise her old spirit, said, dallying prettily over her prawns without eating them—

"I think of making myself accomplished while we are in town, and having singing lessons."

"Why?" said Grandcourt, languidly.

"Why?" echoed Gwendolen, playing at sauciness; "because I can't eat *pâté de foie gras* to make me sleepy, and I can't smoke, and I can't go to the club to make me like to come away again —I want a variety of *ennui*. What would be the most convenient time, when you are busy with your lawyers and people, for me to have lessons

from that little Jewess, whose singing is getting all the rage?"

"Whenever you like," said Grandcourt, pushing away his plate, and leaning back in his chair while he looked at her with his most lizard-like expression, and played with the ears of the tiny spaniel on his lap (Gwendolen had taken a dislike to the dogs because they fawned on him).

Then he said, languidly, "I don't see why a lady should sing. Amateurs make fools of themselves. A lady can't risk herself in that way in company. And one doesn't want to hear squalling in private."

"I like frankness: that seems to me a husband's great charm," said Gwendolen, with her little upward movement of her chin, as she turned her eyes away from his, and lifting a prawn before her, looked at the boiled ingenuousness of its eyes as preferable to the lizard's. "But," she added, having devoured her mortification, "I suppose you don't object to Miss Lapidoth's singing at our party on the 4th? I thought of engaging her. Lady Brackenshaw had her, you know; and the Raymonds, who are very particular about their music. And Mr Deronda, who is a musician himself, and a first-rate judge, says that there is no singing in such good taste as hers for a drawing-room. I think his opinion is an authority."

She meant to sling a small stone at her husband in that way.

"It's very indecent of Deronda to go about praising that girl," said Grandcourt, in a tone of indifference.

"Indecent!" exclaimed Gwendolen, reddening and looking at him again, overcome by startled wonder, and unable to reflect on the probable falsity of the phrase—"to go about praising."

"Yes; and especially when she is patronised by Lady Mallinger. He ought to hold his tongue about her. Men can see what is his relation to her."

"Men who judge of others by themselves," said Gwendolen, turning white after her redness, and immediately smitten with a dread of her own words.

"Of course. And a woman should take their judgment—else she is likely to run her head into the wrong place," said Grandcourt, conscious of using pincers on that white creature. "I suppose you take Deronda for a saint."

"Oh dear no!" said Gwendolen, summoning desperately her almost miraculous power of self-control, and speaking in a high hard tone. "Only a little less of a monster."

She rose, pushed her chair away without hurry, and walked out of the room with something like the care of a man who is afraid of showing that he has taken more wine than usual. She turned the keys inside her dressing-room doors, and sat down for some time looking as pale and quiet as when she was leaving the breakfast-room. Even in the moments after reading the poisonous letter she had hardly had more cruel sensations than now; for emotion was at the acute point, where it is not distinguishable from sensation. Deronda unlike what she had believed him to be, was an image which affected her as a hideous apparition would

have done, quite apart from the way in which it was produced. It had taken hold of her as pain before she could consider whether it were fiction or truth; and further to hinder her power of resistance came the sudden perception, how very slight were the grounds of her faith in Deronda — how little she knew of his life — how childish she had been in her confidence. His rebukes and his severity to her began to seem odious, along with all the poetry and lofty doctrine in the world, whatever it might be; and the grave beauty of his face seemed the most unpleasant mask that the common habits of men could put on.

All this went on in her with the rapidity of a sick dream; and her start into resistance was very much like a waking. Suddenly from out the grey sombre morning there came a stream of sunshine, wrapping her in warmth and light where she sat in stony stillness. She moved gently and looked round her — there was a world outside this bad dream, and the dream proved nothing; she rose, stretching her arms upward and clasping her hands with her habitual attitude when she was seeking relief from oppressive feeling, and walked about the room in this flood of sunbeams.

"It is not true! What does it matter whether *he* believes it or not?" This was what she repeated to herself—but this was not her faith come back again; it was only the desperate cry of faith, finding suffocation intolerable. And how could she go on through the day in this state? With one of her impetuous alternations, her imagination flew to wild actions

by which she would convince herself of what she wished: she would go to Lady Mallinger and question her about Mirah; she would write to Deronda and upbraid him with making the world all false and wicked and hopeless to her—to him she dared pour out all the bitter indignation of her heart. No; she would go to Mirah. This last form taken by her need was more definitely practicable, and quickly became imperious. No matter what came of it. She had the pretext of asking Mirah to sing at her party on the 4th. What was she going to say besides? How satisfy herself? She did not foresee — she could not wait to foresee. If that idea which was maddening her had been a living thing, she would have wanted to throttle it without waiting to foresee what would come of the act. She rang her bell and asked if Mr Grandcourt were gone out: finding that he was, she ordered the carriage, and began to dress for the drive; then she went down, and walked about the large drawing-room like an imprisoned dumb creature, not recognising herself in the glass panels, not noting any object around her in the painted gilded prison. Her husband would probably find out where she had been, and punish her in some way or other—no matter—she could neither desire nor fear anything just now but the assurance that she had not been deluding herself in her trust.

She was provided with Mirah's address. Soon she was on the way with all the fine equipage necessary to carry about her poor uneasy heart, depending in its palpitations on some answer or

other to questioning which she did not know how she should put. She was as heedless of what happened before she found that Miss Lapidoth was at home, as one is of lobbies and passages on the way to a court of justice—heedless of everything till she was in a room where there were folding-doors, and she heard Deronda's voice behind it. Doubtless the identification was helped by forecast, but she was as certain of it as if she had seen him. She was frightened at her own agitation, and began to unbutton her gloves that she might button them again, and bite her lips over the pretended difficulty, while the door opened, and Mirah presented herself with perfect quietude and a sweet smile of recognition. There was relief in the sight of her face, and Gwendolen was able to smile in return, while she put out her hand in silence; and as she seated herself, all the while hearing the voice, she felt some reflux of energy in the confused sense that the truth could not be anything that she dreaded. Mirah drew her chair very near, as if she felt that the sound of the conversation should be subdued, and looked at her visitor with placid expectation, while Gwendolen began in a low tone, with something that seemed like bashfulness—

"Perhaps you wonder to see me—perhaps I ought to have written—but I wished to make a particular request."

"I am glad to see you instead of having a letter," said Mirah, wondering at the changed expression and manner of the "Vandyke duchess," as Hans

had taught her to call Gwendolen. The rich colour and the calmness of her own face were in strong contrast with the pale agitated beauty under the plumed hat.

"I thought," Gwendolen went on—"at least, I hoped you would not object to sing at our house on the 4th—in the evening—at a party like Lady Brackenshaw's. I should be so much obliged."

"I shall be very happy to sing for you. At ten?" said Mirah, while Gwendolen seemed to get more instead of less embarrassed.

"At ten, please," she answered; then paused, and felt that she had nothing more to say. She could not go. It was impossible to rise and say good-bye. Deronda's voice was in her ears. She must say it—she could contrive no other sentence—

"Mr Deronda is in the next room."

"Yes," said Mirah, in her former tone. "He is reading Hebrew with my brother."

"You have a brother?" said Gwendolen, who had heard this from Lady Mallinger, but had not minded it then.

"Yes, a dear brother who is ill—consumptive, and Mr Deronda is the best of friends to him, as he has been to me," said Mirah, with the impulse that will not let us pass the mention of a precious person indifferently.

"Tell me," said Gwendolen, putting her hand on Mirah's, and speaking hardly above a whisper—"tell me—tell me the truth. You are sure he is quite good. You know no evil of him. Any evil that people say of him is false."

Could the proud-spirited woman have behaved more like a child? But the strange words penetrated Mirah with nothing but a sense of solemnity and indignation. With a sudden light in her eyes and a tremor in her voice, she said—

"Who are the people that say evil of him? I would not believe any evil of him, if an angel came to tell it me. He found me when I was so miserable —I was going to drown myself—I looked so poor and forsaken—you would have thought I was a beggar by the wayside. And he treated me as if I had been a king's daughter. He took me to the best of women. He found my brother for me. And he honours my brother—though he too was poor—oh, almost as poor as he could be. And my brother honours him. That is no light thing to say"—here Mirah's tone changed to one of proud emphasis, and she shook her head backward—"for my brother is very learned and great-minded. And Mr Deronda says there are few men equal to him." Some Jewish defiance had flamed into her indignant gratitude, and her anger could not help including Gwendolen, since she seemed to have doubted Deronda's goodness.

But Gwendolen was like one parched with thirst, drinking the fresh water that spreads through the frame as a sufficient bliss. She did not notice that Mirah was angry with her; she was not distinctly conscious of anything but of the penetrating sense that Deronda and his life were no more like her husband's conception than the morning in the horizon was like the morning mixed with street gas:

even Mirah's words seemed to melt into the indefiniteness of her relief. She could hardly have repeated them, or said how her whole state of feeling was changed. She pressed Mirah's hand, and said, "Thank you, thank you," in a hurried whisper—then rose, and added, with only a hazy consciousness, "I must go, I shall see you—on the 4th—I am so much obliged"—bowing herself out automatically; while Mirah, opening the door for her, wondered at what seemed a sudden retreat into chill loftiness.

Gwendolen, indeed, had no feeling to spare in any effusiveness towards the creature who had brought her relief. The passionate need of contradiction to Grandcourt's estimate of Deronda, a need which had blunted her sensibility to everything else, was no sooner satisfied than she wanted to be gone: she began to be aware that she was out of place, and to dread Deronda's seeing her. And once in the carriage again, she had the vision of what awaited her at home. When she drew up before the door in Grosvenor Square, her husband was arriving with a cigar between his fingers. He threw it away and handed her out, accompanying her up-stairs. She turned into the drawing-room, lest he should follow her farther and give her no place to retreat to; then sat down with a weary air, taking off her gloves, rubbing her hand over her forehead, and making his presence as much of a cipher as possible. But he sat too, and not far from her—just in front, where to avoid looking at him must have the emphasis of effort.

"May I ask where you have been at this extraordinary hour?" said Grandcourt.

"Oh yes; I have been to Miss Lapidoth's to ask her to come and sing for us," said Gwendolen, laying her gloves on the little table beside her, and looking down at them.

"And to ask her about her relations with Deronda?" said Grandcourt, with the coldest possible sneer in his low voice, which in poor Gwendolen's ear was diabolical.

For the first time since their marriage she flashed out upon him without inward check. Turning her eyes full on his she said, in a biting tone—

"Yes; and what you said is false—a low, wicked falsehood."

"She told you so—did she?" returned Grandcourt, with a more thoroughly distilled sneer.

Gwendolen was mute. The daring anger within her was turned into the rage of dumbness. What reasons for her belief could she give? All the reasons that seemed so strong and living within her—she saw them suffocated and shrivelled up under her husband's breath. There was no proof to give, but her own impression, which would seem to him her own folly. She turned her head quickly away from him and looked angrily towards the end of the room: she would have risen, but he was in her way.

Grandcourt saw his advantage. "It's of no consequence so far as her singing goes," he said, in his superficial drawl. "You can have her to sing, if you like." Then, after a pause, he added in his

lowest imperious tone, "But you will please to observe that you are not to go near that house again. As my wife, you must take my word about what is proper for you. When you undertook to be Mrs Grandcourt, you undertook not to make a fool of yourself. You have been making a fool of yourself this morning; and if you were to go on as you have begun, you might soon get yourself talked of at the clubs in a way you would not like. What do *you* know about the world? You have married *me*, and must be guided by my opinion."

Every slow sentence of that speech had a terrific mastery in it for Gwendolen's nature. If the low tones had come from a physician telling her that her symptoms were those of a fatal disease, and prognosticating its course, she could not have been more helpless against the argument that lay in it. But she was permitted to move now, and her husband never again made any reference to what had occurred this morning. He knew the force of his own words. If this white-handed man with the perpendicular profile had been sent to govern a difficult colony, he might have won reputation among his contemporaries. He had certainly ability, would have understood that it was safer to exterminate than to cajole superseded proprietors, and would not have flinched from making things safe in that way.

Gwendolen did not, for all this, part with her recovered faith;—rather, she kept it with a more anxious tenacity, as a Protestant of old kept his Bible hidden or a Catholic his crucifix, according

to the side favoured by the civil arm; and it was characteristic of her that apart from the impression gained concerning Deronda in that visit, her imagination was little occupied with Mirah or the eulogised brother. The one result established for her was, that Deronda had acted simply as a generous benefactor, and the phrase "reading Hebrew" had fleeted unimpressively across her sense of hearing, as a stray stork might have made its peculiar flight across her landscape without rousing any surprised reflection on its natural history.

But the issue of that visit, as it regarded her husband, took a strongly active part in the process which made an habitual conflict within her, and was the cause of some external change perhaps not observed by any one except Deronda. As the weeks went on bringing occasional transient interviews with her, he thought that he perceived in her an intensifying of her superficial hardness and resolute display, which made her abrupt betrayals of agitation the more marked and disturbing to him.

In fact, she was undergoing a sort of discipline for the refractory which, as little as possible like conversion, bends half the self with a terrible strain, and exasperates the unwillingness of the other half. Grandcourt had an active divination rather than discernment of refractoriness in her, and what had happened about Mirah quickened his suspicion that there was an increase of it dependent on the occasions when she happened to see Deronda: there was some "confounded nonsense" between them: he did not imagine it exactly as flirtation, and his imagina-

tion in other branches was rather restricted; but it was nonsense that evidently kept up a kind of simmering in her mind—an inward action which might become disagreeably outward. Husbands in the old time are known to have suffered from a threatening devoutness in their wives, presenting itself first indistinctly as oddity, and ending in that mild form of lunatic asylum, a nunnery: Grandcourt had a vague perception of threatening moods in Gwendolen which the unity between them in his views of marriage required him peremptorily to check. Among the means he chose, one was peculiar, and was less ably calculated than the speeches we have just heard.

He determined that she should know the main purport of the will he was making, but he could not communicate this himself, because it involved the fact of his relation to Mrs Glasher and her children; and that there should be any overt recognition of this between Gwendolen and himself was supremely repugnant to him. Like all proud, closely-wrapped natures, he shrank from explicitness and detail, even on trivialities, if they were personal: a valet must maintain a strict reserve with him on the subject of shoes and stockings. And clashing was intolerable to him: his habitual want was to put collision out of the question by the quiet massive pressure of his rule. But he wished Gwendolen to know that before he made her an offer it was no secret to him that she was aware of his relations with Lydia, her previous knowledge being the apology for bringing the subject before

her now. Some men in his place might have thought of writing what he wanted her to know, in the form of a letter. But Grandcourt hated writing: even writing a note was a bore to him, and he had long been accustomed to have all his writing done by Lush. We know that there are persons who will forego their own obvious interest rather than do anything so disagreeable as to write letters; and it is not probable that these imperfect utilitarians would rush into manuscript and syntax on a difficult subject in order to save another's feelings. To Grandcourt it did not even occur that he should, would, or could write to Gwendolen the information in question; and the only medium of communication he could use was Lush, who, to his mind, was as much of an implement as pen and paper. But here too Grandcourt had his reserves, and would not have uttered a word likely to encourage Lush in an impudent sympathy with any supposed grievance in a marriage which had been discommended by him. Who that has a confidant escapes believing too little in his penetration, and too much in his discretion? Grandcourt had always allowed Lush to know his external affairs indiscriminately, irregularities, debts, want of ready money; he had only used discrimination about what he would allow his confidant to say to him; and he had been so accustomed to this human tool, that the having him at call in London was a recovery of lost ease. It followed that Lush knew all the provisions of the will more exactly than they were known to the testator himself

Grandcourt did not doubt that Gwendolen, since she was a woman who could put two and two together, knew or suspected Lush to be the contriver of her interview with Lydia, and that this was the reason why her first request was for his banishment. But the bent of a woman's inferences on mixed subjects which excite mixed passions is not determined by her capacity for simple addition; and here Grandcourt lacked the only organ of thinking that could have saved him from mistake—namely, some experience of the mixed passions concerned. He had correctly divined one half of Gwendolen's dread—all that related to her personal pride, and her perception that his will must conquer hers; but the remorseful half, even if he had known of her broken promise, was as much out of his imagination as the other side of the moon. What he believed her to feel about Lydia was solely a tongue-tied jealousy, and what he believed Lydia to have written with the jewels was the fact that she had once been used to wearing them, with other amenities such as he imputed to the intercourse of jealous women. He had the triumphant certainty that he could aggravate the jealousy and yet smite it with a more absolute dumbness. His object was to engage all his wife's egoism on the same side as his own, and in his employment of Lush he did not intend an insult to her: she ought to understand that he was the only possible envoy. Grandcourt's view of things was considerably fenced in by his general sense, that what suited him, others must put up with. There is no escaping the fact that want of

sympathy condemns us to a corresponding stupidity. Mephistopheles thrown upon real life, and obliged to manage his own plots, would inevitably make blunders.

One morning he went to Gwendolen in the boudoir beyond the back drawing-room, hat and gloves in hand, and said with his best-tempered, most persuasive drawl, standing before her and looking down on her as she sat with a book on her lap—

"A — Gwendolen, there's some business about property to be explained. I have told Lush to come and explain it to you. He knows all about these things. I am going out. He can come up now. He's the only person who can explain. I suppose you'll not mind."

"You know that I do mind," said Gwendolen, angrily, starting up. "I shall not see him." She showed the intention to dart away to the door. Grandcourt was before her, with his back towards it. He was prepared for her anger, and showed none in return, saying, with the same sort of remonstrant tone that he might have used about an objection to dining out—

"It's no use making a fuss. There are plenty of brutes in the world that one has to talk to. People with any *savoir vivre* don't make a fuss about such things. Some business must be done. You don't expect agreeable people to do it. If I employ Lush, the proper thing for you is to take it as a matter of course. Not to make a fuss about it. Not to toss your head and bite your lips about people of that sort."

The drawling and the pauses with which this speech was uttered gave time for crowding reflections in Gwendolen, quelling her resistance. What was there to be told her about property? This word had certain dominant associations for her, first with her mother, then with Mrs Glasher and her children. What would be the use if she refused to see Lush? Could she ask Grandcourt to tell her himself? That might be intolerable, even if he consented, which it was certain he would not, if he had made up his mind to the contrary. The humiliation of standing an obvious prisoner, with her husband barring the door, was not to be borne any longer, and she turned away to lean against a cabinet, while Grandcourt again moved towards her.

"I have arranged with Lush to come up now, while I am out," he said, after a long organ stop, during which Gwendolen made no sign. "Shall I tell him he may come?"

Yet another pause before she could say "Yes"—her face turned obliquely and her eyes cast down.

"I shall come back in time to ride, if you like to get ready," said Grandcourt. No answer. "She is in a desperate rage," thought he. But the rage was silent, and therefore not disagreeable to him. It followed that he turned her chin and kissed her, while she still kept her eyelids down, and she did not move them until he was on the other side of the door.

What was she to do? Search where she would in her consciousness, she found no plea to justify a plaint. Any romantic illusions she had had in

marrying this man had turned on her power of using him as she liked. He was using her as he liked.

She sat awaiting the announcement of Lush as a sort of searing operation that she had to go through. The facts that galled her gathered a burning power when she thought of their lying in his mind. It was all a part of that new gambling in which the losing was not simply a *minus*, but a terrible *plus* that had never entered into her reckoning.

Lush was neither quite pleased nor quite displeased with his task. Grandcourt had said to him by way of conclusion, "Don't make yourself more disagreeable than nature obliges you."

"That depends," thought Lush. But he said, "I will write a brief abstract for Mrs Grandcourt to read." He did not suggest that he should make the whole communication in writing, which was a proof that the interview did not wholly displease him.

Some provision was being made for himself in the will, and he had no reason to be in a bad humour, even if a bad humour had been common with him. He was perfectly convinced that he had penetrated all the secrets of the situation; but he had no diabolic delight in it. He had only the small movements of gratified self-loving resentment in discerning that this marriage fulfilled his own foresight in not being as satisfactory as the supercilious young lady had expected it to be, and as Grandcourt wished to feign that it was. He had no persistent spite much stronger than what gives the seasoning of ordinary scandal to those who repeat

it and exaggerate it by their conjectures. With no active compassion or goodwill, he had just as little active malevolence, being chiefly occupied in liking his particular pleasures, and not disliking anything but what hindered those pleasures—everything else ranking with the last murder and the last *opera buffa*, under the head of things to talk about. Nevertheless, he was not indifferent to the prospect of being treated uncivilly by a beautiful woman, or to the counter-balancing fact that his present commission put into his hands an official power of humiliating her. He did not mean to use it needlessly; but there are some persons so gifted in relation to us that their "How do you do?" seems charged with offence.

By the time that Mr Lush was announced, Gwendolen had braced herself to a bitter resolve that he should not witness the slightest betrayal of her feeling, whatever he might have to tell. She invited him to sit down with stately quietude. After all, what was this man to her? He was not in the least like her husband. Her power of hating a coarse, familiar-mannered man, with clumsy hands, was now relaxed by the intensity with which she hated his contrast.

He held a small paper folded in his hand while he spoke.

"I need hardly say that I should not have presented myself if Mr Grandcourt had not expressed a strong wish to that effect—as no doubt he has mentioned to you."

From some voices that speech might have sound-

ed entirely reverential, and even timidly apologetic. Lush had no intention to the contrary, but to Gwendolen's ear his words had as much insolence in them as his prominent eyes, and the pronoun "you" was too familiar. He ought to have addressed the folding-screen, and spoken of her as Mrs Grandcourt. She gave the smallest sign of a bow, and Lush went on, with a little awkwardness, getting entangled in what is elegantly called tautology.

"My having been in Mr Grandcourt's confidence for fifteen years or more—since he was a youth, in fact—of course gives me a peculiar position. He can speak to me of affairs that he could not mention to any one else; and, in fact, he could not have employed any one else in this affair. I have accepted the task out of friendship for him. Which is my apology for accepting the task—if you would have preferred some one else."

He paused, but she made no sign, and Lush, to give himself a countenance in an apology which met no acceptance, opened the folded paper, and looked at it vaguely before he began to speak again.

"This paper contains some information about Mr Grandcourt's will, an abstract of a part he wished you to know—if you'll be good enough to cast your eyes over it. But there is something I had to say by way of introduction—which I hope you'll pardon me for, if it's not quite agreeable." Lush found that he was behaving better than he had expected, and had no idea how insulting he made himself with his "not quite agreeable."

"Say what you have to say without apologising,

please," said Gwendolen, with the air she might have bestowed on a dog-stealer come to claim a reward for finding the dog he had stolen.

"I have only to remind you of something that occurred before your engagement to Mr Grandcourt," said Lush, not without the rise of some willing insolence in exchange for her scorn. "You met a lady in Cardell Chase, if you remember, who spoke to you of her position with regard to Mr Grandcourt. She had children with her — one a very fine boy."

Gwendolen's lips were almost as pale as her cheeks: her passion had no weapons—words were no better than chips. This man's speech was like a sharp knife-edge drawn across her skin; but even her indignation at the employment of Lush was getting merged in a crowd of other feelings, dim and alarming as a crowd of ghosts.

"Mr Grandcourt was aware that you were acquainted with this unfortunate affair beforehand, and he thinks it only right that his position and intentions should be made quite clear to you. It is an affair of property and prospects; and if there were any objection you had to make, if you would mention it to me—it is a subject which of course he would rather not speak about himself—if you will be good enough just to read this." With the last words Lush rose and presented the paper to her.

When Gwendolen resolved that she would betray no feeling in the presence of this man, she had not prepared herself to hear that her husband knew the silent consciousness, the silently accepted terms on

which she had married him. She dared not raise her hand to take the paper, lest it should visibly tremble. For a moment Lush stood holding it towards her, and she felt his gaze on her as ignominy, before she could say even with low-toned haughtiness—

"Lay it on the table. And go into the next room, please."

Lush obeyed, thinking as he took an easy-chair in the back drawing-room, "My lady winces considerably. She didn't know what would be the charge for that superfine article, Henleigh Grandcourt." But it seemed to him that a penniless girl had done better than she had any right to expect, and that she had been uncommonly knowing for her years and opportunities: her words to Lydia meant nothing, and her running away had probably been part of her adroitness. It had turned out a masterstroke.

Meanwhile Gwendolen was rallying her nerves to the reading of the paper. She must read it. Her whole being—pride, longing for rebellion, dreams of freedom, remorseful conscience, dread of fresh visitation—all made one need to know what the paper contained. But at first it was not easy to take in the meaning of the words. When she had succeeded, she found that in the case of there being no son as issue of her marriage, Grandcourt had made the small Henleigh his heir;—that was all she cared to extract from the paper with any distinctness. The other statements as to what provision would be made for her in the same case, she hurried over,

getting only a confused perception of thousands and Gadsmere. It was enough. She could dismiss the man in the next room with the defiant energy which had revived in her at the idea that this question of property and inheritance was meant as a finish to her humiliations and her thraldom.

She thrust the paper between the leaves of her book, which she took in her hand, and walked with her stateliest air into the next room, where Lush immediately rose, awaiting her approach. When she was four yards from him, it was hardly an instant that she paused to say in a high tone, while she swept him with her eyelashes—

"Tell Mr Grandcourt that his arrangements are just what I desired"—passing on without haste, and leaving Lush time to mingle some admiration of her graceful back with that half-amused sense of her spirit and impertinence, which he expressed by raising his eyebrows and just thrusting his tongue between his teeth. He really did not want her to be worse punished, and he was glad to think that it was time to go and lunch at the club, where he meant to have a lobster salad.

What did Gwendolen look forward to? When her husband returned he found her equipped in her riding-dress, ready to ride out with him. She was not again going to be hysterical, or take to her bed and say she was ill. That was the implicit resolve adjusting her muscles before she could have framed it in words, as she walked out of the room, leaving Lush behind her. She was going to act in the spirit of her message, and not to give herself time

to reflect. She rang the bell for her maid, and went with the usual care through her change of toilet. Doubtless her husband had meant to produce a great effect on her: by-and-by perhaps she would let him see an effect the very opposite of what he intended; but at present all that she could show was a defiant satisfaction in what had been presumed to be disagreeable. It came as an instinct rather than a thought, that to show any sign which could be interpreted as jealousy, when she had just been insultingly reminded that the conditions were what she had accepted with her eyes open, would be the worst self-humiliation. She said to herself that she had not time to-day to be clear about her future actions; all she could be clear about was that she would match her husband in ignoring any ground for excitement. She not only rode, but went out with him to dine, contributing nothing to alter their mutual manner, which was never that of rapid interchange in discourse; and curiously enough she rejected a handkerchief on which her maid had by mistake put the wrong scent—a scent that Grandcourt had once objected to. Gwendolen would not have liked to be an object of disgust to this husband whom she hated: she liked all disgust to be on her side.

But to defer thought in this way was something like trying to talk down the singing in her own ears. The thought that is bound up with our passion is as penetrative as air—everything is porous to it; bows, smiles, conversation, repartee, are mere honeycombs where such thought rushes freely, not always with a

taste of honey. And without shutting herself up in any solitude, Gwendolen seemed at the end of nine or ten hours to have gone through a labyrinth of reflection, in which already the same succession of prospects had been repeated, the same fallacious outlets rejected, the same shrinking from the necessities of every course. Already she was undergoing some hardening effect from feeling that she was under eyes which saw her past actions solely in the light of her lowest motives. She lived back in the scenes of her courtship, with the new bitter consciousness of what had been in Grandcourt's mind —certain now, with her present experience of him, that he had had a peculiar triumph in conquering her dumb repugnance, and that ever since their marriage he had had a cold exultation in knowing her fancied secret. Her imagination exaggerated every tyrannical impulse he was capable of. "I will insist on being separated from him"—was her first darting determination: then, "I will leave him, whether he consents or not. If this boy becomes his heir, I have made an atonement." But neither in darkness nor in daylight could she imagine the scenes which must carry out those determinations with the courage to feel them endurable. How could she run away to her own family—carry distress among them, and render herself an object of scandal in the society she had left behind her? What future lay before her as Mrs Grandcourt gone back to her mother, who would be made destitute again by the rupture of the marriage for which one chief excuse had been that it had brought that

mother a maintenance? She had lately been seeing her uncle and Anna in London, and though she had been saved from any difficulty about inviting them to stay in Grosvenor Square by their wish to be with Rex, who would not risk a meeting with her, the transient visit she had had from them helped now in giving stronger colour to the picture of what it would be for her to take refuge in her own family. What could she say to justify her flight? Her uncle would tell her to go back. Her mother would cry. Her aunt and Anna would look at her with wondering alarm. Her husband would have power to compel her. She had absolutely nothing that she could allege against him in judicious or judicial ears. And to "insist on separation!" That was an easy combination of words; but considered as an action to be executed against Grandcourt, it would be about as practicable as to give him a pliant disposition and a dread of other people's unwillingness. How was she to begin? What was she to say that would not be a condemnation of herself? "If I am to have misery anyhow," was the bitter refrain of her rebellious dreams, "I had better have the misery that I can keep to myself." Moreover, her capability of rectitude told her again and again that she had no right to complain of her contract, or to withdraw from it.

And always among the images that drove her back to submission was Deronda. The idea of herself separated from her husband, gave Deronda a changed, perturbing, painful place in her consciousness: instinctively she felt that the separation

would be from him too, and in the prospective vision of herself as a solitary, dubiously regarded woman, she felt some tingling bashfulness at the remembrance of her behaviour towards him. The association of Deronda with a dubious position for herself was intolerable. And what would he say if he knew everything? Probably that she ought to bear what she had brought on herself, unless she were sure that she could make herself a better woman by taking any other course. And what sort of woman was she to be—solitary, sickened of life, looked at with a suspicious kind of pity?—even if she could dream of success in getting that dreary freedom. Mrs Grandcourt "run away" would be a more pitiable creature than Gwendolen Harleth condemned to teach the bishop's daughters, and to be inspected by Mrs Mompert.

One characteristic trait in her conduct is worth mentioning. She would not look a second time at the paper Lush had given her; and before ringing for her maid she locked it up in a travelling-desk which was at hand, proudly resolved against curiosity about what was allotted to herself in connection with Gadsmere—feeling herself branded in the minds of her husband and his confidant with the meanness that would accept marriage and wealth on any conditions, however dishonourable and humiliating.

Day after day the same pattern of thinking was repeated. There came nothing to change the situation—no new elements in the sketch—only a recurrence which engraved it. The May weeks went on into June, and still Mrs Grandcourt was outwardly

in the same place, presenting herself as she was expected to do in the accustomed scenes, with the accustomed grace, beauty, and costume; from church at one end of the week, through all the scale of desirable receptions, to opera at the other. Church was not markedly distinguished in her mind from the other forms of self-presentation, for marriage had included no instruction that enabled her to connect liturgy and sermon with any larger order of the world than that of unexplained and perhaps inexplicable social fashions. While a laudable zeal was labouring to carry the light of spiritual law up the alleys where law is chiefly known as the policeman, the brilliant Mrs Grandcourt, condescending a little to a fashionable Rector and conscious of a feminine advantage over a learned Dean, was, so far as pastoral care and religious fellowship were concerned, in as complete a solitude as a man in a lighthouse.

Can we wonder at the practical submission which hid her constructive rebellion? The combination is common enough, as we know from the number of persons who make us aware of it in their own case by a clamorous unwearied statement of the reasons against their submitting to a situation which, on inquiry, we discover to be the least disagreeable within their reach. Poor Gwendolen had both too much and too little mental power and dignity to make herself exceptional. No wonder that Deronda now marked some hardening in a look and manner which were schooled daily to the suppression of feeling.

For example. One morning, riding in Rotten Row with Grandcourt by her side, she saw standing against the railing at the turn, just facing them, a dark-eyed lady with a little girl and a blond boy, whom she at once recognised as the beings in all the world the most painful for her to behold. She and Grandcourt had just slackened their pace to a walk; he being on the outer side was the nearer to the unwelcome vision, and Gwendolen had not presence of mind to do anything but glance away from the dark eyes that met hers piercingly towards Grandcourt, who wheeled past the group with an unmoved face, giving no sign of recognition.

Immediately she felt a rising rage against him mingling with her shame for herself, and the words, "You might at least have raised your hat to her," flew impetuously to her lips — but did not pass them. If as her husband, in her company, he chose to ignore these creatures whom she herself had excluded from the place she was filling, how could she be the person to reproach him? She was dumb.

It was not chance, but her own design, that had brought Mrs Glasher there with her boy. She had come to town under the pretext of making purchases —really wanting educational apparatus for the children, and had had interviews with Lush in which he had not refused to soothe her uneasy mind by representing the probabilities as all on the side of her ultimate triumph. Let her keep quiet, and she might live to see the marriage dissolve itself in one way or other—Lush hinted at several ways

—leaving the succession assured to her boy. She had had an interview with Grandcourt too, who had as usual told her to behave like a reasonable woman, and threatened punishment if she were troublesome; but had, also as usual, vindicated himself from any wish to be stingy, the money he was receiving from Sir Hugo on account of Diplow encouraging his disposition to be lavish. Lydia, feeding on the probabilities in her favour, devoured her helpless wrath along with that pleasanter nourishment; but she could not let her discretion go entirely without the reward of making a Medusa-apparition before Gwendolen, vindictiveness and jealousy finding relief in an outlet of venom, though it were as futile as that of a viper already flung to the other side of the hedge. Hence each day, after finding out from Lush the likely time for Gwendolen to be riding, she had watched at that post, daring Grandcourt so far. Why should she not take little Henleigh into the Park?

The Medusa-apparition was made effective beyond Lydia's conception by the shock it gave Gwendolen actually to see Grandcourt ignoring this woman who had once been the nearest in the world to him, along with the children she had borne him. And all the while the dark shadow thus cast on the lot of a woman destitute of acknowledged social dignity, spread itself over her visions of a future that might be her own, and made part of her dread on her own behalf. She shrank all the more from any lonely action. What possible release could there be for her from this hated vantage-ground, which yet she

dared not quit, any more than if fire had been raining outside it? What release, but death? Not her own death. Gwendolen was not a woman who could easily think of her own death as a near reality, or front for herself the dark entrance on the untried and invisible. It seemed more possible that Grandcourt should die:—and yet not likely. The power of tyranny in him seemed a power of living in the presence of any wish that he should die. The thought that his death was the only possible deliverance for her was one with the thought that deliverance would never come—the double deliverance from the injury with which other beings might reproach her and from the yoke she had brought on her own neck. No! she foresaw him always living, and her own life dominated by him; the "always" of her young experience not stretching beyond the few immediate years that seemed immeasurably long with her passionate weariness. The thought of his dying would not subsist: it turned as with a dream-change into the terror that she should die with his throttling fingers on her neck avenging that thought. Fantasies moved within her like ghosts, making no break in her more acknowledged consciousness and finding no obstruction in it: dark rays doing their work invisibly in the broad light.

Only an evening or two after that encounter in the Park, there was a grand concert at Klesmer's, who was living rather magnificently now in one of the large houses in Grosvenor Place, a patron and prince among musical professors. Gwendolen had

looked forward to this occasion as one on which she was sure to meet Deronda, and she had been meditating how to put a question to him which, without containing a word that she would feel a dislike to utter, would yet be explicit enough for him to understand it. The struggle of opposite feelings would not let her abide by her instinct that the very idea of Deronda's relation to her was a discouragement to any desperate step towards freedom. The next wave of emotion was a longing for some word of his to enforce a resolve. The fact that her opportunities of conversation with him had always to be snatched in the doubtful privacy of large parties, caused her to live through them many times beforehand, imagining how they would take place and what she would say. The irritation was proportionate when no opportunity came; and this evening at Klesmer's she included Deronda in her anger, because he looked as calm as possible at a distance from her, while she was in danger of betraying her impatience to every one who spoke to her. She found her only safety in a chill haughtiness which made Mr Vandernoodt remark that Mrs Grandcourt was becoming a perfect match for her husband. When at last the chances of the evening brought Deronda near her, Sir Hugo and Mrs Raymond were close by and could hear every word she said. No matter: her husband was not near, and her irritation passed without check into a fit of daring which restored the security of her self-possession. Deronda was there at last, and she would compel him to do what she pleased. Al-

ready and without effort rather queenly in her air as she stood in her white lace and green leaves, she threw a royal permissiveness into her way of saying, "I wish you would come and see me to-morrow between five and six, Mr Deronda."

There could be but one answer at that moment: "Certainly," with a tone of obedience.

Afterwards it occurred to Deronda that he would write a note to excuse himself. He had always avoided making a call at Grandcourt's. But he could not persuade himself to any step that might hurt her, and whether his excuse were taken for indifference or for the affectation of indifference it would be equally wounding. He kept his promise. Gwendolen had declined to ride out on the plea of not feeling well enough, having left her refusal to the last moment when the horses were soon to be at the door—not without alarm lest her husband should say that he too would stay at home. Become almost superstitious about his power of suspicious divination, she had a glancing forethought of what she would do in that case—namely, have herself denied as not well. But Grandcourt accepted her excuse without remark, and rode off.

Nevertheless when Gwendolen found herself alone, and had sent down the order that only Mr Deronda was to be admitted, she began to be alarmed at what she had done, and to feel a growing agitation in the thought that he would soon appear, and she should soon be obliged to speak: not of trivialities, as if she had had no serious motive in asking him to come; and yet what she

had been for hours determining to say began to seem impossible. For the first time the impulse of appeal to him was being checked by timidity; and now that it was too late she was shaken by the possibility that he might think her invitation unbecoming. If so, she would have sunk in his esteem. But immediately she resisted this intolerable fear as an infection from her husband's way of thinking. That *he* would say she was making a fool of herself was rather a reason why such a judgment would be remote from Deronda's mind. But that she could not rid herself from this sudden invasion of womanly reticence was manifest in a kind of action which had never occurred to her before. In her struggle between agitation and the effort to suppress it, she was walking up and down the length of two drawing-rooms, where at one end a long mirror reflected her in her black dress, chosen in the early morning with a half-admitted reference to this hour. But above this black dress her head on its white pillar of a neck showed to advantage. Some consciousness of this made her turn hastily and hurry to the boudoir, where again there was glass, but also, tossed over a chair, a large piece of black lace which she snatched and tied over her crown of hair so as completely to conceal her neck, and leave only her face looking out from the black frame. In this manifest contempt of appearance, she thought it possible to be freer from nervousness, but the black lace did not take away the uneasiness from her eyes and lips.

She was standing in the middle of the room when

Deronda was announced, and as he approached her she perceived that he too for some reason was not his usual self. She could not have defined the change except by saying that he looked less happy than usual, and appeared to be under some effort in speaking to her. And yet the speaking was the slightest possible. They both said, "How do you do?" quite curtly; and Gwendolen, instead of sitting down, moved to a little distance, resting her arms slightly on the tall back of a chair, while Deronda stood where he was,—both feeling it difficult to say anything more, though the preoccupation in his mind could hardly have been more remote than it was from Gwendolen's conception. She naturally saw in his embarrassment some reflection of her own. Forced to speak, she found all her training in concealment and self-command of no use to her, and began with timid awkwardness—

"You will wonder why I begged you to come. I wanted to ask you something. You said I was ignorant. That is true. And what can I do but ask you?"

And at this moment she was feeling it utterly impossible to put the questions she had intended. Something new in her nervous manner roused Deronda's anxiety lest there might be a new crisis. He said with the sadness of affection in his voice—

"My only regret is, that I can be of so little use to you." The words and the tone touched a new spring in her, and she went on with more sense of freedom, yet still not saying anything she had de-

signed to say, and beginning to hurry, that she might somehow arrive at the right words.

"I wanted to tell you that I have always been thinking of your advice, but is it any use?—I can't make myself different, because things about me raise bad feelings—and I must go on—I can alter nothing —it is no use."

She paused an instant, with the consciousness that she was not finding the right words, but began again as hurriedly, "But if I go on, I shall get worse. I want not to get worse. I should like to be what you wish. There are people who are good and enjoy great things—I know there are. I am a contemptible creature. I feel as if I should get wicked with hating people. I have tried to think that I would go away from everybody. But I can't. There are so many things to hinder me. You think, perhaps, that I don't mind. But I do mind. I am afraid of everything. I am afraid of getting wicked. Tell me what I can do."

She had forgotten everything but that image of her helpless misery which she was trying to make present to Deronda in broken allusive speech—wishing to convey but not express all her need. Her eyes were tearless, and had a look of smarting in their dilated brilliancy; there was a subdued sob in her voice which was more and more veiled, till it was hardly above a whisper. She was hurting herself with the jewels that glittered on her tightly-clasped fingers pressed against her heart.

The feeling Deronda endured in these moments he afterwards called horrible. Words seemed to

have no more rescue in them than if he had been beholding a vessel in peril of wreck—the poor ship with its many-lived anguish beaten by the inescapable storm. How could he grasp the long-growing process of this young creature's wretchedness?—how arrest and change it with a sentence? He was afraid of his own voice. The words that rushed into his mind seemed in their feebleness nothing better than despair made audible, or than that insensibility to another's hardship which applies precept to soothe pain. He felt himself holding a crowd of words imprisoned within his lips, as if the letting them escape would be a violation of awe before the mysteries of our human lot. The thought that urged itself foremost was—"Confess everything to your husband; leave nothing concealed:"—the words carried in his mind a vision of reasons which would have needed much fuller expression for Gwendolen to apprehend them, but before he had begun to utter those brief sentences, the door opened and the husband entered.

Grandcourt had deliberately gone out and turned back to satisfy a suspicion. What he saw was Gwendolen's face of anguish framed black like a nun's and Deronda standing three yards from her with a look of sorrow such as he might have bent on the last struggle of life in a beloved object. Without any show of surprise, Grandcourt nodded to Deronda, gave a second look at Gwendolen, passed on, and seated himself easily at a little distance, crossing his legs, taking out his handkerchief and trifling with it elegantly.

Gwendolen had shrunk and changed her attitude on seeing him, but she did not turn or move from her place. It was not a moment in which she could feign anything, or manifest any strong revulsion of feeling: the passionate movement of her last speech was still too strong within her. What she felt besides was a dull despairing sense that her interview with Deronda was at an end: a curtain had fallen. But he, naturally, was urged into self-possession and effort by susceptibility to what might follow for her from being seen by her husband in this betrayal of agitation; and feeling that any pretence of ease in prolonging his visit would only exaggerate Grandcourt's possible conjectures of duplicity, he merely said—

"I will not stay longer now. Good-bye."

He put out his hand, and she let him press her poor little chill fingers; but she said no good-bye.

When he had left the room, Gwendolen threw herself into a seat, with an expectation as dull as her despair — the expectation that she was going to be punished. But Grandcourt took no notice; he was satisfied to have let her know that she had not deceived him, and to keep a silence which was formidable with omniscience. He went out that evening, and her plea of feeling ill was accepted without even a sneer.

The next morning at breakfast he said, "I am going yachting to the Mediterranean."

"When?" said Gwendolen, with a leap of heart which had hope in it.

"The day after to-morrow. The yacht is at Marseilles. Lush is gone to get everything ready."

"Shall I have mamma to stay with me, then?" said Gwendolen, the new sudden possibility of peace and affection filling her mind like a burst of morning light.

"No; you will go with me."

CHAPTER XLIX.

Ever in his soul
That larger justice which makes gratitude
Triumphed above resentment. 'Tis the mark
Of regal natures, with the wider life,
And fuller capability of joy:—
Not wits exultant in the strongest lens
To show you goodness vanished into pulp
Never worth "thank you"—they're the devil's friars,
Vowed to be poor as he in love and trust,
Yet must go begging of a world that keeps
Some human property.

DERONDA, in parting from Gwendolen, had abstained from saying, "I shall not see you again for a long while: I am going away," lest Grandcourt should understand him to imply that the fact was of importance to her.

He was actually going away under circumstances so momentous to himself that when he set out to fulfil his promise of calling on her, he was already under the shadow of a solemn emotion which revived the deepest experience of his life.

Sir Hugo had sent for him to his chambers with the note — "Come immediately. Something has happened:" a preparation that caused him some relief when, on entering the baronet's study, he

was received with grave affection instead of the distress which he had apprehended.

"It is nothing to grieve you, sir?" said Deronda, in a tone rather of restored confidence than question, as he took the hand held out to him. There was an unusual meaning in Sir Hugo's look, and a subdued emotion in his voice, as he said—

"No, Dan, no. Sit down. I have something to say."

Deronda obeyed, not without presentiment. It was extremely rare for Sir Hugo to show so much serious feeling.

"Not to grieve me, my boy, no. At least, if there is nothing in it that will grieve you too much. But I hardly expected that this—just this—would ever happen. There have been reasons why I have never prepared you for it. There have been reasons why I have never told you anything about your parentage. But I have striven in every way not to make that an injury to you."

Sir Hugo paused, but Deronda could not speak. He could not say, "I have never felt it an injury." Even if that had been true, he could not have trusted his voice to say anything. Far more than any one but himself could know of was hanging on this moment when the secrecy was to be broken. Sir Hugo had never seen the grand face he delighted in so pale—the lips pressed together with such a look of pain. He went on with a more anxious tenderness, as if he had a new fear of wounding.

"I have acted in obedience to your mother's wishes. The secrecy was her wish. But now

she desires to remove it. She desires to see you. I will put this letter into your hands, which you can look at by-and-by. It will merely tell you what she wishes you to do, and where you will find her."

Sir Hugo held out a letter written on foreign paper, which Deronda thrust into his breast-pocket, with a sense of relief that he was not called on to read anything immediately. The emotion on Daniel's face had gained on the baronet, and was visibly shaking his composure. Sir Hugo found it difficult to say more. And Deronda's whole soul was possessed by a question which was the hardest in the world to utter. Yet he could not bear to delay it. This was a sacramental moment. If he let it pass, he could not recover the influences under which it was possible to utter the words and meet the answer. For some moments his eyes were cast down, and it seemed to both as if thoughts were in the air between them. But at last Deronda looked at Sir Hugo, and said, with a tremulous reverence in his voice—dreading to convey indirectly the reproach that affection had for years been stifling—

"Is my father also living?"

The answer came immediately in a low emphatic tone—

"No."

In the mingled emotions which followed that answer it was impossible to distinguish joy from pain.

Some new light had fallen on the past for Sir

Hugo too in this interview. After a silence in which Deronda felt like one whose creed is gone before he has religiously embraced another, the baronet said, in a tone of confession—

"Perhaps I was wrong, Dan, to undertake what I did. And perhaps I liked it a little too well—having you all to myself. But if you have had any pain which I might have helped, I ask you to forgive me."

"The forgiveness has long been there," said Deronda. "The chief pain has always been on account of some one else—whom I never knew—whom I am now to know. It has not hindered me from feeling an affection for you which has made a large part of all the life I remember."

It seemed one impulse that made the two men clasp each other's hand for a moment.

BOOK VII.

THE MOTHER AND THE SON

CHAPTER L.

"If some mortal, born too soon,
Were laid away in some great trance—the ages
Coming and going all the while—till dawned
His true time's advent; and could then record
The words they spoke who kept watch by his bed,—
Then I might tell more of the breath so light
Upon my eyelids, and the fingers warm
Among my hair. Youth is confused; yet never
So dull was I but, when that spirit passed,
I turned to him, scarce consciously, as turns
A water-snake when fairies cross his sleep."

—BROWNING: *Paracelsus.*

THIS was the letter which Sir Hugo put into Deronda's hands:—

TO MY SON, DANIEL DERONDA.

My good friend and yours, Sir Hugo Mallinger, will have told you that I wish to see you. My health is shaken, and I desire there should be no time lost before I deliver to you what I have long withheld. Let nothing hinder you from being at the *Albergo dell' Italia* in Genoa by the fourteenth of this month. Wait for me there. I am uncertain when I shall be able to make the journey from Spezia, where I shall be staying. That will depend

on several things. Wait for me—the Princess Halm-Eberstein. Bring with you the diamond ring that Sir Hugo gave you. I shall like to see it again.—Your unknown mother,

LEONORA HALM-EBERSTEIN.

This letter with its colourless wording gave Deronda no clue to what was in reserve for him; but he could not do otherwise than accept Sir Hugo's reticence, which seemed to imply some pledge not to anticipate the mother's disclosures; and the discovery that his life-long conjectures had been mistaken checked further surmise. Deronda could not hinder his imagination from taking a quick flight over what seemed possibilities, but he refused to contemplate any one of them as more likely than another, lest he should be nursing it into a dominant desire or repugnance, instead of simply preparing himself with resolve to meet the fact bravely, whatever it might turn out to be.

In this state of mind he could not have communicated to any one the reason for the absence which in some quarters he was obliged to mention beforehand, least of all to Mordecai, whom it would affect as powerfully as it did himself, only in rather a different way. If he were to say, "I am going to learn the truth about my birth," Mordecai's hope would gather what might prove a painful, dangerous excitement. To exclude suppositions, he spoke of his journey as being undertaken by Sir Hugo's wish, and threw as much indifference as he could into his manner of announcing it, saying he was

uncertain of its duration, but it would perhaps be very short.

"I will ask to have the child Jacob to stay with me," said Mordecai, comforting himself in this way, after the first mournful glances.

"I will drive round and ask Mrs Cohen to let him come," said Mirah.

"The grandmother will deny you nothing," said Deronda. "I'm glad you were a little wrong as well as I," he added, smiling at Mordecai. "You thought that old Mrs Cohen would not bear to see Mirah."

"I undervalued her heart," said Mordecai. "She is capable of rejoicing that another's plant blooms though her own be withered."

"Oh, they are dear good people; I feel as if we all belonged to each other," said Mirah, with a tinge of merriment in her smile.

"What should you have felt if that Ezra had been your brother?" said Deronda, mischievously—a little provoked that she had taken kindly at once to people who had caused him so much prospective annoyance on her account.

Mirah looked at him with a slight surprise for a moment, and then said, "He is not a bad man—I think he would never forsake any one." But when she had uttered the words she blushed deeply, and glancing timidly at Mordecai, turned away to some occupation. Her father was in her mind, and this was a subject on which she and her brother had a painful mutual consciousness. "If he should come and find us!" was a thought which to Mirah some-

times made the street daylight as shadowy as a haunted forest where each turn screened for her an imaginary apparition.

Deronda felt what was her involuntary allusion, and understood the blush. How could he be slow to understand feelings which now seemed nearer than ever to his own? for the words of his mother's letter implied that his filial relation was not to be freed from painful conditions; indeed, singularly enough that letter which had brought his mother nearer as a living reality had thrown her into more remoteness for his affections. The tender yearning after a being whose life might have been the worse for not having his care and love, the image of a mother who had not had all her dues whether of reverence or compassion, had long been secretly present with him in his observation of all the women he had come near. But it seemed now that this picturing of his mother might fit the facts no better than his former conceptions about Sir Hugo. He wondered to find that when this mother's very handwriting had come to him with words holding her actual feeling, his affections had suddenly shrunk into a state of comparative neutrality towards her. A veiled figure with enigmatic speech had thrust away that image which, in spite of uncertainty, his clinging thought had gradually modelled and made the possessor of his tenderness and duteous longing. When he set off to Genoa, the interest really uppermost in his mind had hardly so much relation to his mother as to Mordecai and Mirah.

"God bless you, Dan!" Sir Hugo had said, when

they shook hands. "Whatever else changes for you, it can't change my being the oldest friend you have known, and the one who has all along felt the most for you. I couldn't have loved you better if you'd been my own—only I should have been better pleased with thinking of you always as the future master of the Abbey instead of my fine nephew; and then you would have seen it necessary for you to take a political line. However—things must be as they may." It was a defensive measure of the baronet's to mingle purposeless remarks with the expression of serious feeling.

When Deronda arrived at the *Italia* in Genoa, no Princess Halm-Eberstein was there; but on the second day there was a letter for him, saying that her arrival might happen within a week, or might be deferred a fortnight and more: she was under circumstances which made it impossible for her to fix her journey more precisely, and she entreated him to wait as patiently as he could.

With this indefinite prospect of suspense on matters of supreme moment to him, Deronda set about the difficult task of seeking amusement on philosophic grounds, as a means of quieting excited feeling and giving patience a lift over a weary road. His former visit to the superb city had been only cursory, and left him much to learn beyond the prescribed round of sight-seeing, by spending the cooler hours in observant wandering about the streets, the quay, and the environs; and he often took a boat that he might enjoy the magnificent view of the city and harbour from the sea. All sights, all subjects,

even the expected meeting with his mother, found a central union in Mordecai and Mirah, and the ideas immediately associated with them; and among the thoughts that most filled his mind while his boat was pushing about within view of the grand harbour was that of the multitudinous Spanish Jews centuries ago driven destitute from their Spanish homes, suffered to land from the crowded ships only for brief rest on this grand quay of Genoa, overspreading it with a pall of famine and plague—dying mothers with dying children at their breasts—fathers and sons agaze at each other's haggardness, like groups from a hundred Hunger-towers turned out beneath the mid-day sun. Inevitably, dreamy constructions of a possible ancestry for himself would weave themselves with historic memories which had begun to have a new interest for him on his discovery of Mirah, and now, under the influence of Mordecai, had become irresistibly dominant. He would have sealed his mind against such constructions if it had been possible, and he had never yet fully admitted to himself that he wished the facts to verify Mordecai's conviction: he inwardly repeated that he had no choice in the matter, and that wishing was folly—nay, on the question of parentage, wishing seemed part of that meanness which disowns kinship: it was a disowning by anticipation. What he had to do was simply to accept the fact; and he had really no strong presumption to go upon, now that he was assured of his mistake about Sir Hugo. There had been a resolved concealment which made all inference untrustworthy, and the very name

he bore might be a false one. If Mordecai were wrong — if he, the so-called Daniel Deronda, were held by ties entirely aloof from any such course as his friend's pathetic hope had marked out?—he would not say "I wish;" but he could not help feeling on which side the sacrifice lay.

Across these two importunate thoughts, which he resisted as much as one can resist anything in that unstrung condition which belongs to suspense, there came continually an anxiety which he made no effort to banish—dwelling on it rather with a mournfulness, which often seems to us the best atonement we can make to one whose need we have been unable to meet. The anxiety was for Gwendolen. In the wonderful mixtures of our nature there is a feeling distinct from that exclusive passionate love of which some men and women (by no means all) are capable, which yet is not the same with friendship, nor with a merely benevolent regard, whether admiring or compassionate: a man, say—for it is a man who is here concerned—hardly represents to himself this shade of feeling towards a woman more nearly than in the words, "I should have loved her, if——:" the "if" covering some prior growth in the inclinations, or else some circumstances which have made an inward prohibitory law as a stay against the emotions ready to quiver out of balance. The "if" in Deronda's case carried reasons of both kinds; yet he had never throughout his relations with Gwendolen been free from the nervous consciousness that there was something to guard against not only on her account but on his own — some precipitancy

in the manifestation of impulsive feeling — some ruinous inroad of what is but momentary on the permanent chosen treasure of the heart—some spoiling of her trust, which wrought upon him now as if it had been the retreating cry of a creature snatched and carried out of his reach by swift horsemen or swifter waves, while his own strength was only a stronger sense of weakness. How could his feeling for Gwendolen ever be exactly like his feeling for other women, even when there was one by whose side he desired to stand apart from them? Strangely her figure entered into the pictures of his present and future; strangely (and now it seemed sadly) their two lots had come in contact, hers narrowly personal, his charged with far-reaching sensibilities, perhaps with durable purposes, which were hardly more present to her than the reasons why men migrate are present to the birds that come as usual for the crumbs and find them no more. Not that Deronda was too ready to imagine himself of supreme importance to a woman; but her words of insistance that he "must remain near her—must not forsake her"—continually recurred to him with the clearness and importunity of imagined sounds, such as Dante has said pierce us like arrows whose points carry the sharpness of pity:—

Lamenti saettaron me diversi
Che di pietà ferrati avean gli strali."

Day after day passed, and the very air of Italy seemed to carry the consciousness that war had been declared against Austria, and every day was a hurrying march of crowded Time towards the world-

changing battle of Sadowa. Meanwhile, in Genoa, the noons were getting hotter, the converging outer roads getting deeper with white dust, the oleanders in the tubs along the wayside gardens looking more and more like fatigued holiday-makers, and the sweet evening changing her office — scattering abroad those whom the mid-day had sent under shelter, and sowing all paths with happy social sounds, little tinklings of mule-bells and whirrings of thrumbed strings, light footsteps and voices, if not leisurely, then with the hurry of pleasure in them; while the encircling heights, crowned with forts, skirted with fine dwellings and gardens, seemed also to come forth and gaze in fulness of beauty after their long siesta, till all strong colour melted in the stream of moonlight which made the streets a new spectacle with shadows, both still and moving, on cathedral steps and against the façades of massive palaces; and then slowly with the descending moon all sank in deep night and silence, and nothing shone but the port lights of the great Lanterna in the blackness below, and the glimmering stars in the blackness above. Deronda, in his suspense, watched this revolving of the days as he might have watched a wonderful clock where the striking of the hours was made solemn with antique figures advancing and retreating in monitory procession, while he still kept his ear open for another kind of signal which would have its solemnity too. He was beginning to sicken of occupation, and found himself contemplating all activity with the aloofness of a prisoner

awaiting ransom. In his letters to Mordecai and Hans, he had avoided writing about himself, but he was really getting into that state of mind to which all subjects become personal; and the few books he had brought to make him a refuge in study were becoming unreadable, because the point of view that life would make for him was in that agitating moment of uncertainty which is close upon decision.

Many nights were watched through by him in gazing from the open window of his room on the double, faintly pierced darkness of the sea and the heavens: often in struggling under the oppressive scepticism which represented his particular lot, with all the importance he was allowing Mordecai to give it, as of no more lasting effect than a dream—a set of changes which made passion to him, but beyond his consciousness were no more than an imperceptible difference of mass or shadow; sometimes with a reaction of emotive force which gave even to sustained disappointment, even to the fulfilled demand of sacrifice, the nature of a satisfied energy, and spread over his young future, whatever it might be, the attraction of devoted service; sometimes with a sweet irresistible hopefulness that the very best of human possibilities might befall him—the blending of a complete personal love in one current with a larger duty; and sometimes again in a mood of rebellion (what human creature escapes it?) against things in general because they are thus and not otherwise, a mood in which Gwendolen and her equivocal fate moved as busy images of what

was amiss in the world along with the concealments which he had felt as a hardship in his own life, and which were acting in him now under the form of an afflicting doubtfulness about the mother who had announced herself coldly and still kept away.

But at last she was come. One morning in his third week of waiting there was a new kind of knock at the door. A servant in chasseur's livery entered and delivered in French the verbal message that the Princess Halm-Eberstein had arrived, that she was going to rest during the day, but would be obliged if Monsieur would dine early, so as to be at liberty at seven, when she would be able to receive him.

CHAPTER LI.

She held the spindle as she sat,
Erinna with the thick-coiled mat
Of raven hair and deepest agate eyes,
Gazing with a sad surprise
At surging visions of her destiny—
To spin the byssus drearily
In insect-labour, while the throng
Of gods and men wrought deeds that poets wrought in song.

When Deronda presented himself at the door of his mother's apartment in the *Italia*, he felt some revival of his boyhood with its premature agitations. The two servants in the antechamber looked at him markedly, a little surprised that the doctor their lady had come to consult was this striking young gentleman whose appearance gave even the severe lines of an evening dress the credit of adornment. But Deronda could notice nothing until, the second door being opened, he found himself in the presence of a figure which at the other end of the large room stood awaiting his approach.

She was covered, except as to her face and part of her arms, with black lace hanging loosely from the summit of her whitening hair to the long train stretching from her tall figure. Her arms, naked from the elbow, except for some rich bracelets, were

folded before her, and the fine poise of her head made it look handsomer than it really was. But Deronda felt no interval of observation before he was close in front of her, holding the hand she had put out and then raising it to his lips. She still kept her hand in his and looked at him examiningly; while his chief consciousness was that her eyes were piercing and her face so mobile that the next moment she might look like a different person. For even while she was examining him there was a play of the brow and nostril which made a tacit language. Deronda dared no movement, not able to conceive what sort of manifestation her feeling demanded; but he felt himself changing colour like a girl, and yet wondering at his own lack of emotion: he had lived through so many ideal meetings with his mother, and they had seemed more real than this! He could not even conjecture in what language she would speak to him. He imagined it would not be English. Suddenly, she let fall his hand, and placed both hers on his shoulders, while her face gave out a flash of admiration in which every worn line disappeared and seemed to leave a restored youth.

"You are a beautiful creature!" she said in a low melodious voice, with syllables which had what might be called a foreign but agreeable outline. "I knew you would be." Then she kissed him on each cheek, and he returned her kisses. But it was something like a greeting between royalties.

She paused a moment, while the lines were com-

ing back into her face, and then said in a colder tone, "I am your mother. But you can have no love for me."

"I have thought of you more than of any other being in the world," said Deronda, his voice trembling nervously.

"I am not like what you thought I was," said the mother, decisively, withdrawing her hands from his shoulders and folding her arms as before, looking at him as if she invited him to observe her. He had often pictured her face in his imagination as one which had a likeness to his own: he saw some of the likeness now, but amidst more striking differences. She was a remarkable-looking being. What was it that gave her son a painful sense of aloofness?—Her worn beauty had a strangeness in it as if she were not quite a human mother, but a Melusina, who had ties with some world which is independent of ours.

"I used to think that you might be suffering," said Deronda, anxious above all not to wound her. "I used to wish that I could be a comfort to you."

"I *am* suffering. But with a suffering that you can't comfort," said the Princess, in a harder voice than before, moving to a sofa where cushions had been carefully arranged for her. "Sit down." She pointed to a seat near her; and then discerning some distress in Deronda's face, she added, more gently, "I am not suffering at this moment. I am at ease now. I am able to talk."

Deronda seated himself and waited for her to speak again. It seemed as if he were in the pres-

ence of a mysterious Fate rather than of the longed-for mother. He was beginning to watch her with wonder, from the spiritual distance to which she had thrown him.

"No," she began; "I did not send for you to comfort me. I could not know beforehand — I don't know now—what you will feel towards me. I have not the foolish notion that you can love me merely because I am your mother, when you have never seen or heard of me all your life. But I thought I chose something better for you than being with me. I did not think that I deprived you of anything worth having."

"You cannot wish me to believe that your affection would not have been worth having," said Deronda, finding that she paused as if she expected him to make some answer.

"I don't mean to speak ill of myself," said the Princess, with proud impetuosity, "but I had not much affection to give you. I did not want affection. I had been stifled with it. I wanted to live out the life that was in me, and not to be hampered with other lives. You wonder what I was. I was no princess then." She rose with a sudden movement, and stood as she had done before. Deronda immediately rose too; he felt breathless.

"No princess in this tame life that I live in now. I was a great singer, and I acted as well as I sang. All the rest were poor beside me. Men followed me from one country to another. I was living a myriad lives in one. I did not want a child."

There was a passionate self-defence in her tone. She had cast all precedent out of her mind. Precedent had no excuse for her, and she could only seek a justification in the intensest words she could find for her experience. She seemed to fling out the last words against some possible reproach in the mind of her son, who had to stand and hear them—clutching his coat-collar as if he were keeping himself above water by it, and feeling his blood in the sort of commotion that might have been excited if he had seen her going through some strange rite of a religion which gave a sacredness to crime. What else had she to tell him? She went on with the same intensity and a sort of pale illumination in her face.

"I did not want to marry. I was forced into marrying your father—forced, I mean, by my father's wishes and commands; and besides, it was my best way of getting some freedom. I could rule my husband, but not my father. I had a right to be free. I had a right to seek my freedom from a bondage that I hated."

She seated herself again, while there was that subtle movement in her eyes and closed lips which is like the suppressed continuation of speech. Deronda continued standing, and after a moment or two she looked up at him with a less defiant pleading as she said—

"And the bondage I hated for myself I wanted to keep you from. What better could the most loving mother have done? I relieved you from the bondage of having been born a Jew."

"Then I *am* a Jew?" Deronda burst out with a deep-voiced energy that made his mother shrink a little backward against her cushions. "My father was a Jew, and you are a Jewess?"

"Yes, your father was my cousin," said the mother, watching him with a change in her look, as if she saw something that she might have to be afraid of.

"I am glad of it," said Deronda, impetuously, in the veiled voice of passion. He could not have imagined beforehand how he would come to say that which he had never hitherto admitted. He could not have dreamed that it would be in impulsive opposition to his mother. He was shaken by a mixed anger which no reflection could come soon enough to check, against this mother who it seemed had borne him unwillingly, had willingly made herself a stranger to him, and—perhaps—was now making herself known unwillingly. This last suspicion seemed to flash some explanation over her speech.

But the mother was equally shaken by an anger differently mixed, and her frame was less equal to any repression. The shaking with her was visibly physical, and her eyes looked the larger for her pallid excitement as she said violently—

"Why do you say you are glad? You are an English gentleman. I secured you that."

"You did not know *what* you secured me. How could you choose my birthright for me?" said Deronda, throwing himself sideways into his chair again, almost unconsciously, and leaning his arm

over the back while he looked away from his mother.

He was fired with an intolerance that seemed foreign to him. But he was now trying hard to master himself and keep silence. A horror had swept in upon his anger lest he should say something too hard in this moment which made an epoch never to be recalled. There was a pause before his mother spoke again, and when she spoke her voice had become more firmly resistant in its finely varied tones:

"I chose for you what I would have chosen for myself. How could I know that you would have the spirit of my father in you? How could I know that you would love what I hated?—if you really love to be a Jew." The last words had such bitterness in them that any one overhearing might have supposed some hatred had arisen between the mother and son.

But Deronda had recovered his fuller self. He was recalling his sensibilities to what life had been and actually was for her whose best years were gone, and who with the signs of suffering in her frame was now exerting herself to tell him of a past which was not his alone but also hers. His habitual shame at the acceptance of events as if they were his only, helped him even here. As he looked at his mother silently after her last words, his face regained some of its penetrative calm; yet it seemed to have a strangely agitating influence over her: her eyes were fixed on him with a sort of fascination, but not with any repose of maternal delight.

"Forgive me if I speak hastily," he said, with diffident gravity. "Why have you resolved now on disclosing to me what you took care to have me brought up in ignorance of? Why — since you seem angry that I should be glad?"

"Oh—the reasons of our actions!" said the Princess, with a ring of something like sarcastic scorn. "When you are as old as I am, it will not seem so simple a question—'Why did you do this?' People talk of their motives in a cut and dried way. Every woman is supposed to have the same set of motives, or else to be a monster. I am not a monster, but I have not felt exactly what other women feel—or say they feel, for fear of being thought unlike others. When you reproach me in your heart for sending you away from me, you mean that I ought to say I felt about you as other women say they feel about their children. I did *not* feel that. I was glad to be freed from you. But I did well for you, and I gave you your father's fortune. Do I seem now to be revoking everything?—Well, there are reasons. I feel many things that I can't understand. A fatal illness has been growing in me for a year. I shall very likely not live another year. I will not deny anything I have done. I will not pretend to love where I have no love. But shadows are rising round me. Sickness makes them. If I have wronged the dead—I have but little time to do what I left undone."

The varied transitions of tone with which this speech was delivered were as perfect as the most accomplished actress could have made them. The

speech was in fact a piece of what may be called sincere acting: this woman's nature was one in which all feeling—and all the more when it was tragic as well as real—immediately became matter of conscious representation: experience immediately passed into drama, and she acted her own emotions. In a minor degree this is nothing uncommon, but in the Princess the acting had a rare perfection of physiognomy, voice, and gesture. It would not be true to say that she felt less because of this double consciousness: she felt—that is, her mind went through—all the more, but with a difference: each nucleus of pain or pleasure had a deep atmosphere of the excitement or spiritual intoxication which at once exalts and deadens. But Deronda made no reflection of this kind. All his thoughts hung on the purport of what his mother was saying; her tones and her wonderful face entered into his agitation without being noted. What he longed for with an awed desire was to know as much as she would tell him of the strange mental conflict under which it seemed that he had been brought into the world: what his compassionate nature made the controlling idea within him were the suffering and the confession that breathed through her later words, and these forbade any further question, when she paused and remained silent, with her brow knit, her head turned a little away from him, and her large eyes fixed as if on something incorporeal. He must wait for her to speak again. She did so with strange abruptness, turning her eyes upon him suddenly, and saying more quickly—

"Sir Hugo has written much about you. He tells me you have a wonderful mind—you comprehend everything—you are wiser than he is with all his sixty years. You say you are glad to know that you were born a Jew. I am not going to tell you that I have changed my mind about that. Your feelings are against mine. You don't thank me for what I did. Shall you comprehend your mother—or only blame her?"

"There is not a fibre within me but makes me wish to comprehend her," said Deronda, meeting her sharp gaze solemnly. "It is a bitter reversal of my longing to think of blaming her. What I have been most trying to do for fifteen years is to have some understanding of those who differ from myself."

"Then you have become unlike your grandfather in that," said the mother, "though you are a young copy of him in your face. He never comprehended me, or if he did, he only thought of fettering me into obedience. I was to be what he called 'the Jewish woman' under pain of his curse. I was to feel everything I did not feel, and believe everything I did not believe. I was to feel awe for the bit of parchment in the *mezuza* over the door; to dread lest a bit of butter should touch a bit of meat; to think it beautiful that men should bind the *tephillin* on them, and women not,—to adore the wisdom of such laws, however silly they might seem to me. I was to love the long prayers in the ugly synagogue, and the howling, and the gabbling, and the dreadful fasts, and the tiresome

feasts, and my father's endless discoursing about Our People, which was a thunder without meaning in my ears. I was to care for ever about what Israel had been; and I did not care at all. I cared for the wide world, and all that I could represent in it. I hated living under the shadow of my father's strictness. Teaching, teaching for everlasting—'this you must be,' 'that you must not be'—pressed on me like a frame that got tighter and tighter as I grew. I wanted to live a large life, with freedom to do what every one else did, and be carried along in a great current, not obliged to care. Ah!"—here her tone changed to one of a more bitter incisiveness—"you are glad to have been born a Jew. You say so. That is because you have not been brought up as a Jew. That separateness seems sweet to you because I saved you from it."

"When you resolved on that, you meant that I should never know my origin?" said Deronda, impulsively. "You have at least changed in your feeling on that point."

"Yes, that was what I meant. That is what I persevered in. And it is not true to say that I have changed. Things have changed in spite of me. I am still the same Leonora"—she pointed with her forefinger to her breast—"here within me is the same desire, the same will, the same choice, *but*"—she spread out her hands, palm upwards, on each side of her, as she paused with a bitter compression of her lip, then let her voice fall into muffled, rapid utterance—"events come

upon us like evil enchantments: and thoughts, feelings, apparitions in the darkness are events—are they not? I don't consent. We only consent to what we love. I obey something tyrannic"—she spread out her hands again—"I am forced to be withered, to feel pain, to be dying slowly. Do I love that? Well, I have been forced to obey my dead father. I have been forced to tell you that you are a Jew, and deliver to you what he commanded me to deliver."

"I beseech you to tell me what moved you—when you were young, I mean—to take the course you did," said Deronda, trying by this reference to the past to escape from what to him was the heart-rending piteousness of this mingled suffering and defiance. "I gather that my grandfather opposed your bent to be an artist. Though my own experience has been quite different, I enter into the painfulness of your struggle. I can imagine the hardship of an enforced renunciation.'

"No," said the Princess, shaking her head, and folding her arms with an air of decision. "You are not a woman. You may try—but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl. To have a pattern cut out—'this is the Jewish woman; this is what you must be; this is what you are wanted for; a woman's heart must be of such a size and no larger, else it must be pressed small, like Chinese feet; her happiness is to be made as cakes are, by a fixed receipt.' That was what my father wanted. He wished I

had been a son; he cared for me as a makeshift link. His heart was set on his Judaism. He hated that Jewish women should be thought of by the Christian world as a sort of ware to make public singers and actresses of. As if we were not the more enviable for that! That is a chance of escaping from bondage."

"Was my grandfather a learned man?" said Deronda, eager to know particulars that he feared his mother might not think of.

She answered impatiently, putting up her hand, "Oh yes,—and a clever physician — and good: I don't deny that he was good. A man to be admired in a play—grand, with an iron will. Like the old Foscari before he pardons. But such men turn their wives and daughters into slaves. They would rule the world if they could; but not ruling the world, they throw all the weight of their will on the necks and souls of women. But nature sometimes thwarts them. My father had no other child than his daughter, and she was like himself."

She had folded her arms again, and looked as if she were ready to face some impending attempt at mastery.

"Your father was different. Unlike me—all lovingness and affection. I knew I could rule him; and I made him secretly promise me, before I married him, that he would put no hindrance in the way of my being an artist. My father was on his deathbed when we were married: from the first he had fixed his mind on my marrying my cousin Ephraim. And when a woman's will is as strong

as the man's who wants to govern her, half her strength must be concealment. I meant to have my will in the end, but I could only have it by seeming to obey. I had an awe of my father—always I had had an awe of him: it was impossible to help it. I hated to feel awed—I wished I could have defied him openly; but I never could. It was what I could not imagine: I could not act it to myself that I should begin to defy my father openly and succeed. And I never would risk failure."

That last sentence was uttered with an abrupt emphasis, and she paused after it as if the words had raised a crowd of remembrances which obstructed speech. Her son was listening to her with feelings more and more highly mixed: the first sense of being repelled by the frank coldness which had replaced all his preconceptions of a mother's tender joy in the sight of him; the first impulses of indignation at what shocked his most cherished emotions and principles—all these busy elements of collision between them were subsiding for a time, and making more and more room for that effort at just allowance and that admiration of a forcible nature whose errors lay along high pathways, which he would have felt if, instead of being his mother, she had been a stranger who had appealed to his sympathy. Still it was impossible to be dispassionate: he trembled lest the next thing she had to say would be more repugnant to him than what had gone before: he was afraid of the strange coercion she seemed to be under to lay her mind bare: he almost wished he could say, "Tell me only what is

necessary," and then again he felt the fascination that made him watch her and listen to her eagerly. He tried to recall her to particulars by asking—

"Where was my grandfather's home?"

"Here in Genoa, when I was married; and his family had lived here generations ago. But my father had been in various countries."

"You must surely have lived in England?"

"My mother was English—a Jewess of Portuguese descent. My father married her in England. Certain circumstances of that marriage made all the difference in my life: through that marriage my father thwarted his own plans. My mother's sister was a singer, and afterwards she married the English partner of a merchant's house here in Genoa, and they came and lived here eleven years. My mother died when I was eight years old, and then my father allowed me to be continually with my aunt Leonora and be taught under her eyes, as if he had not minded the danger of her encouraging my wish to be a singer, as she had been. But this was it—I saw it again and again in my father:—he did not guard against consequences, because he felt sure he could hinder them if he liked. Before my aunt left Genoa, I had had enough teaching to bring out the born singer and actress within me: my father did not know everything that was done; but he knew that I was taught music and singing—he knew my inclination. That was nothing to him: he meant that I should obey his will. And he was resolved that I should marry my cousin Ephraim, the only one left of my father's family that he knew.

I wanted not to marry. I thought of all plans to resist it, but at last I found that I could rule my cousin, and I consented. My father died three weeks after we were married, and then I had my way!" She uttered these words almost exultantly; but after a little pause her face changed, and she said in a biting tone, "It has not lasted, though. My father is getting his way now."

She began to look more contemplatively again at her son, and presently said—

"You are like him—but milder—there is something of your own father in you; and he made it the labour of his life to devote himself to me: wound up his money-changing and banking, and lived to wait upon me—he went against his conscience for me. As I loved the life of my art, so he loved me. Let me look at your hand again: the hand with the ring on. It was your father's ring."

He drew his chair nearer to her and gave her his hand. We know what kind of hand it was: her own, very much smaller, was of the same type. As he felt the smaller hand holding his, as he saw nearer to him the face that held the likeness of his own, aged not by time but by intensity, the strong bent of his nature towards a reverential tenderness asserted itself above every other impression, and in his most fervent tone he said—

"Mother! take us all into your heart—the living and the dead. Forgive everything that hurts you in the past. Take my affection."

She looked at him admiringly rather than lovingly, then kissed him on the brow, and saying

sadly, "I reject nothing, but I have nothing to give," she released his hand and sank back on her cushions. Deronda turned pale with what seems always more of a sensation than an emotion—the pain of repulsed tenderness. She noticed the expression of pain, and said, still with melodious melancholy in her tones—

"It is better so. We must part again soon, and you owe me no duties. I did not wish you to be born. I parted with you willingly. When your father died, I resolved that I would have no more ties, but such as I could free myself from. I was the Alcharisi you have heard of: the name had magic wherever it was carried. Men courted me. Sir Hugo Mallinger was one who wished to marry me. He was madly in love with me. One day I asked him, 'Is there a man capable of doing something for love of me, and expecting nothing in return?' He said, 'What is it you want done?' I said, 'Take my boy and bring him up as an Englishman, and let him never know anything about his parents.' You were little more than two years old, and were sitting on his foot. He declared that he would pay money to have such a boy. I had not meditated much on the plan beforehand, but as soon as I had spoken about it, it took possession of me as something I could not rest without doing. At first he thought I was not serious, but I convinced him, and he was never surprised at anything. He agreed that it would be for your good, and the finest thing for you. A great singer and actress is a queen, but she gives no royalty to her son.—All

that happened at Naples. And afterwards I made Sir Hugo the trustee of your fortune. That is what I did; and I had a joy in doing it. My father had tyrannised over me—he cared more about a grandson to come than he did about me: I counted as nothing. You were to be such a Jew as he; you were to be what he wanted. But you were my son, and it was my turn to say what you should be. I said you should not know you were a Jew."

"And for months events have been preparing me to be glad that I am a Jew," said Deronda, his opposition roused again. The point touched the quick of his experience. "It would always have been better that I should have known the truth. I have always been rebelling against the secrecy that looked like shame. It is no shame to have Jewish parents—the shame is to disown it."

"You say it was a shame to me, then, that I used that secrecy," said his mother, with a flash of new anger. "There is no shame attaching to me. I have no reason to be ashamed. I rid myself of the Jewish tatters and gibberish that make people nudge each other at sight of us, as if we were tattoed under our clothes, though our faces are as whole as theirs. I delivered you from the pelting contempt that pursues Jewish separateness. I am not ashamed that I did it. It was the better for you."

"Then why have you now undone the secrecy?—no, not undone it—the effects will never be undone. But why have you now sent for me to tell me that I am a Jew?" said Deronda, with an intensity of opposition in feeling that was almost bitter. It seemed

as if her words had called out a latent obstinacy of race in him.

"Why?—ah, why?" said the Princess, rising quickly and walking to the other side of the room, where she turned round and slowly approached him, as he, too, stood up. Then she began to speak again in a more veiled voice. "I can't explain; I can only say what is. I don't love my father's religion now any more than I did then. Before I married the second time I was baptised; I made myself like the people I lived among. I had a right to do it; I was not like a brute, obliged to go with my own herd. I have not repented; I will not say that I have repented. But yet,"—here she had come near to her son, and paused; then again retreated a little and stood still, as if resolute not to give way utterly to an imperious influence; but, as she went on speaking, she became more and more unconscious of anything but the awe that subdued her voice. "It is illness, I don't doubt that it has been gathering illness,—my mind has gone back; more than a year ago it began. You see my grey hair, my worn look: it has all come fast. Sometimes I am in an agony of pain—I daresay I shall be to-night. Then it is as if all the life I have chosen to live, all thoughts, all will, forsook me and left me alone in spots of memory, and I can't get away: my pain seems to keep me there. My childhood—my girlhood—the day of my marriage—the day of my father's death—there seems to be nothing since. Then a great horror comes over me: what do I know of life or death? and what my father

called 'right' may be a power that is laying hold of me—that is clutching me now. Well, I will satisfy him. I cannot go into the darkness without satisfying him. I have hidden what was his. I thought once I would burn it. I have not burnt it. I thank God I have not burnt it!"

She threw herself on her cushions again, visibly fatigued. Deronda, moved too strongly by her suffering for other impulses to act within him, drew near her, and said, entreatingly—

"Will you not spare yourself this evening? Let us leave the rest till to-morrow."

"No," she said, decisively. "I will confess it all, now that I have come up to it. Often when I am at ease it all fades away; my whole self comes quite back; but I know it will sink away again, and the other will come—the poor, solitary, forsaken remains of self, that can resist nothing. It was my nature to resist, and say, 'I have a right to resist.' Well, I say so still when I have any strength in me. You have heard me say it, and I don't withdraw it. But when my strength goes, some other right forces itself upon me like iron in an inexorable hand; and even when I am at ease, it is beginning to make ghosts upon the daylight. And now you have made it worse for me," she said, with a sudden return of impetuosity; "but I shall have told you everything. And what reproach is there against me," she added, bitterly, "since I have made you glad to be a Jew? Joseph Kalonymos reproached me: he said you had been turned into a proud Englishman, who resented being touched by a Jew. I wish you had!" she

ended, with a new marvellous alternation. It was as if her mind were breaking into several, one jarring the other into impulsive action.

"Who is Joseph Kalonymos?" said Deronda, with a darting recollection of that Jew who touched his arm in the Frankfort synagogue.

"Ah! some vengeance sent him back from the East, that he might see you and come to reproach me. He was my father's friend. He knew of your birth: he knew of my husband's death, and once, twenty years ago, after he had been away in the Levant, he came to see me and inquire about you. I told him that you were dead: I meant you to be dead to all the world of my childhood. If I had said you were living, he would have interfered with my plans: he would have taken on him to represent my father, and have tried to make me recall what I had done. What could I do but say you were dead? The act was done. If I had told him of it there would have been trouble and scandal—and all to conquer me, who would not have been conquered. I was strong then, and I would have had my will, though there might have been a hard fight against me. I took the way to have it without any fight. I felt then that I was not really deceiving: it would have come to the same in the end; or if not to the same, to something worse. He believed me, and begged that I would give up to him the chest that my father had charged me and my husband to deliver to our eldest son. I knew what was in the chest—things that had been dinned in my ears since I had had any understanding—things that were thrust on my mind

that I might feel them like a wall around my life—my life that was growing like a tree. Once, after my husband died, I was going to burn the chest. But it was difficult to burn; and burning a chest and papers looks like a shameful act. I have committed no shameful act — except what Jews would call shameful. I had kept the chest, and I gave it to Joseph Kalonymos. He went away mournful, and said, 'If you marry again, and if another grandson is born to him who is departed, I will deliver up the chest to him.' I bowed in silence. I meant not to marry again—no more than I meant to be the shattered woman that I am now."

She ceased speaking, and her head sank back while she looked vaguely before her. Her thought was travelling through the years, and when she began to speak again her voice had lost its argumentative spirit, and had fallen into a veiled tone of distress.

"But months ago this Kalonymos saw you in the synagogue at Frankfort. He saw you enter the hotel, and he went to ask your name. There was nobody else in the world to whom the name would have told anything about me."

"Then it is not my real name?" said Deronda, with a dislike even to this trifling part of the disguise which had been thrown round him.

"Oh, as real as another," said his mother, indifferently. "The Jews have always been changing their names. My father's family had kept the name of Charisi: my husband was a Charisi. When I came

out as a singer, we made it Alcharisi. But there had been a branch of the family my father had lost sight of who called themselves Deronda, and when I wanted a name for you, and Sir Hugo said, 'Let it be a foreign name,' I thought of Deronda. But Joseph Kalonymos had heard my father speak of the Deronda branch, and the name confirmed his suspicion. He began to suspect what had been done. It was as if everything had been whispered to him in the air. He found out where I was. He took a journey into Russia to see me; he found me weak and shattered. He had come back again, with his white hair, and with rage in his soul against me. He said I was going down to the grave clad in falsehood and robbery—falsehood to my father and robbery of my own child. He accused me of having kept the knowledge of your birth from you, and having brought you up as if you had been the son of an English gentleman. Well, it was true; and twenty years before I would have maintained that I had a right to do it. But I can maintain nothing now. No faith is strong within me. My father may have God on his side. This man's words were like lion's teeth upon me. My father's threats eat into me with my pain. If I tell everything—if I deliver up everything—what else can be demanded of me? I cannot make myself love the people I have never loved—is it not enough that I lost the life I did love?"

She had leaned forward a little in her low-toned pleading, that seemed like a smothered cry: her arms and hands were stretched out at full length, as if strained in beseeching. Deronda's soul was

absorbed in the anguish of compassion. He could not mind now that he had been repulsed before. His pity made a flood of forgiveness within him. His single impulse was to kneel by her and take her hand gently between his palms, while he said in that exquisite voice of soothing which expresses oneness with the sufferer—

"Mother, take comfort!"

She did not seem inclined to repulse him now, but looked down at him and let him take both her hands to fold between his. Gradually tears gathered, but she pressed her handkerchief against her eyes and then leaned her cheek against his brow, as if she wished that they should not look at each other.

"Is it not possible that I could be near you often and comfort you?" said Deronda. He was under that stress of pity that propels us on sacrifices.

"No, not possible," she answered, lifting up her head again and withdrawing her hand as if she wished him to move away. "I have a husband and five children. None of them know of your existence."

Deronda felt painfully silenced. He rose and stood at a little distance.

"You wonder why I married," she went on presently, under the influence of a newly-recurring thought. "I meant never to marry again. I meant to be free, and to live for my art. I had parted with you. I had no bonds. For nine years I was a queen. I enjoyed the life I had longed for. But something befell me. It was like a fit of forgetfulness. I began to sing out of tune. They told me of it. Another woman was thrusting herself in

my place. I could not endure the prospect of failure and decline. It was horrible to me." She started up again, with a shudder, and lifted screening hands like one who dreads missiles. "It drove me to marry. I made believe that I preferred being the wife of a Russian noble to being the greatest lyric actress of Europe; I made believe—I acted that part. It was because I felt my greatness sinking away from me, as I feel my life sinking now. I would not wait till men said, 'She had better go.'"

She sank into her seat again, and looked at the evening sky as she went on: "I repented. It was a resolve taken in desperation. That singing out of tune was only like a fit of illness; it went away. I repented; but it was too late. I could not go back. All things hindered me—all things."

A new haggardness had come in her face, but her son refrained from again urging her to leave further speech till the morrow: there was evidently some mental relief for her in an outpouring such as she could never have allowed herself before. He stood still while she maintained silence longer than she knew, and the light was perceptibly fading. At last she turned to him and said—

"I can bear no more now." She put out her hand, but then quickly withdrew it saying, "Stay. How do I know that I can see you again? I cannot bear to be seen when I am in pain."

She drew forth a pocket-book, and taking out a letter said, "This is addressed to the banking-house in Mainz, where you are to go for your grandfather's chest. It is a letter written by Joseph Kalonymos:

if he is not there himself, this order of his will be obeyed."

When Deronda had taken the letter, she said, with effort, but more gently than before, "Kneel again, and let me kiss you."

He obeyed, and holding his head between her hands she kissed him solemnly on the brow. "You see I had no life left to love you with," she said, in a low murmur. "But there is more fortune for you. Sir Hugo was to keep it in reserve. I gave you all your father's fortune. They can never accuse me of robbery there."

"If you had needed anything I would have worked for you," said Deronda, conscious of a disappointed yearning—a shutting out for ever from long early vistas of affectionate imagination.

"I need nothing that the skill of man can give me," said his mother, still holding his head, and perusing his features. "But perhaps now I have satisfied my father's will, your face will come instead of his—your young, loving face."

"But you will see me again?" said Deronda, anxiously.

"Yes—perhaps. Wait, wait. Leave me now."

CHAPTER LII.

"La même fermeté qui sert à résister à l'amour sert aussi à le rendre violent et durable ; et les personnes foibles qui sont toujours agitées des passions n'en sont presque jamais véritablement remplies."—LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

AMONG Deronda's letters the next morning was one from Hans Meyrick of four quarto pages, in the small beautiful handwriting which ran in the Meyrick family.

MY DEAR DERONDA,—In return for your sketch of Italian movements and your view of the world's affairs generally, I may say that here at home the most judicious opinion going as to the effects of present causes is that "time will show." As to the present causes of past effects, it is now seen that the late swindling telegrams account for the last year's cattle plague—which is a refutation of philosophy falsely so called, and justifies the compensation to the farmers. My own idea that a murrain will shortly break out in the commercial class, and that the cause will subsequently disclose itself in the ready sale of all rejected pictures, has been called an unsound use of analogy; but there

are minds that will not hesitate to rob even the neglected painter of his solace. To my feeling there is great beauty in the conception that some bad judge might give a high price for my Berenice series, and that the men in the city would have already been punished for my ill-merited luck.

Meanwhile I am consoling myself for your absence by finding my advantage in it—shining like Hesperus when Hyperion has departed—sitting with our Hebrew prophet, and making a study of his head, in the hours when he used to be occupied with you —getting credit with him as a learned young Gentile, who would have been a Jew if he could —and agreeing with him in the general principle, that whatever is best is for that reason Jewish. I never held it my *forte* to be a severe reasoner, but I can see that if whatever is best is A and B happens to be best, B must be A, however little you might have expected it beforehand. On that principle, I could see the force of a pamphlet I once read to prove that all good art was Protestant. However, our prophet is an uncommonly interesting sitter—a better model than Rembrandt had for his Rabbi—and I never come away from him without a new discovery. For one thing, it is a constant wonder to me that, with all his fiery feeling for his race and their traditions, he is no strait-laced Jew, spitting after the word Christian, and enjoying the prospect that the Gentile mouth will water in vain for a slice of the roasted Leviathan, while Israel will be sending up plates for more, *ad libitum*. (You perceive that my studies had taught me what to

expect from the orthodox Jew.) I confess that I have always held lightly by your account of Mordecai, as apologetic, and merely part of your disposition to take an antediluvian point of view lest you should do injustice to the megatherium. But now I have given ear to him in his proper person, I find him really a sort of philosophical-allegorical-mystical believer, and yet with a sharp dialectic point, so that any argumentative rattler of peas in a bladder might soon be pricked into silence by him. The mixture may be one of the Jewish prerogatives, for what I know. In fact, his mind seems so broad that I find my own correct opinions lying in it quite commodiously, and how they are to be brought into agreement with the vast remainder is his affair, not mine. I leave it to him to settle our basis, never yet having seen a basis which is not a world-supporting elephant, more or less powerful and expensive to keep. My means will not allow me to keep a private elephant. I go into mystery instead, as cheaper and more lasting—a sort of gas which is likely to be continually supplied by the decomposition of the elephants. And if I like the look of an opinion, I treat it civilly, without suspicious inquiries. I have quite a friendly feeling towards Mordecai's notion that a whole Christian is three-fourths a Jew, and that from the Alexandrian time downward, the most comprehensive minds have been Jewish; for I think of pointing out to Mirah that, Arabic and other accidents of life apart, there is really little difference between me and—Maimonides. But I have lately been finding out that it is

your shallow lover who can't help making a declaration. If Mirah's ways were less distracting, and it were less of a heaven to be in her presence and watch her, I must long ago have flung myself at her feet, and requested her to tell me, with less indirectness, whether she wished me to blow my brains out. I have a knack of hoping, which is as good as an estate in reversion, if one can keep from the temptation of turning it into certainty, which may spoil all. My Hope wanders among the orchard-blossoms, feels the warm snow falling on it through the sunshine, and is in doubt of nothing; but, catching sight of Certainty in the distance, sees an ugly Janus-faced deity, with a dubious wink on the hither side of him, and turns quickly away. But you, with your supreme reasonableness, and self-nullification, and preparation for the worst—you know nothing about Hope, that immortal delicious maiden, for ever courted, for ever propitious, whom fools have called deceitful, as if it were Hope that carried the cup of disappointment, whereas it is her deadly enemy Certainty, whom she only escapes by transformation. (You observe my new vein of allegory?) Seriously, however, I must be permitted to allege that truth will prevail, that prejudice will melt before it, that diversity, accompanied by merit, will make itself felt as fascination, and that no virtuous aspiration will be frustrated—all which, if I mistake not, are doctrines of the schools, and all imply that the Jewess I prefer will prefer me. Any blockhead can cite generalities, but the master-mind discerns the particular cases they represent.

I am less convinced that my society makes amends to Mordecai for your absence, but another substitute occasionally comes in the form of Jacob Cohen. It is worth while to catch our prophet's expression when he has that remarkable type of young Israel on his knee, and pours forth some Semitic inspiration with a sublime look of melancholy patience and devoutness. Sometimes it occurs to Jacob that Hebrew will be more edifying to him if he stops his ears with his palms, and imitates the venerable sounds as heard through that muffling medium. When Mordecai gently draws down the little fists and holds them fast, Jacob's features all take on an extraordinary activity, very much as if he were walking through a menagerie and trying to imitate every animal in turn, succeeding best with the owl and the peccary. But I daresay you have seen something of this. He treats me with the easiest familiarity, and seems in general to look at me as a second-hand Christian commodity, likely to come down in price; remarking on my disadvantages with a frankness which seems to imply some thoughts of future purchase. It is pretty, though, to see the change in him if Mirah happens to come in. He turns child suddenly—his age usually strikes one as being like the Israelitish garments in the desert, perhaps near forty, yet with an air of recent production. But, with Mirah, he reminds me of the dogs that have been brought up by women, and remain manageable by them only. Still, the dog is fond of Mordecai *too,* and brings sugar-plums to share with him,

filling his own mouth to rather an embarrassing extent, and watching how Mordecai deals with a smaller supply. Judging from this modern Jacob at the age of six, my astonishment is that his race has not bought us all up long ago, and pocketed our feebler generations in the form of stock and scrip, as so much slave property. There is one Jewess I should not mind being slave to. But I wish I did not imagine that Mirah gets a little sadder, and tries all the while to hide it. It is natural enough, of course, while she has to watch the slow death of this brother, whom she has taken to worshipping with such looks of loving devoutness that I am ready to wish myself in his place.

For the rest, we are a little merrier than usual. Rex Gascoigne—you remember a head you admired among my sketches, a fellow with a good upper lip, reading law—has got some rooms in town now not far off us, and has had a neat sister (upper lip also good) staying with him the last fortnight. I have introduced them both to my mother and the girls, who have found out from Miss Gascoigne that she is cousin to your Vandyke duchess!!! I put the notes of exclamation to mark the surprise that the information at first produced on my feeble understanding. On reflection I discovered that there was not the least ground for surprise, unless I had beforehand believed that nobody could be anybody's cousin without my knowing it. This sort of surprise, I take it, depends on a liveliness of the spine, with a more or less constant nullity of brain. There

was a fellow I used to meet at Rome who was in an effervescence of surprise at contact with the simplest information. Tell him what you would—that you were fond of easy boots—he would always say, "No! *are* you?" with the same energy of wonder: the very fellow of whom pastoral Browne wrote prophetically—

> "A wretch so empty that if e'er there be
> In nature found the least vacuity
> 'Twill be in him."

I have accounted for it all—he had a lively spine.

However, this cousinship with the duchess came out by chance one day that Mirah was with them at home and they were talking about the Mallingers. *Apropos;* I am getting so important that I have rival invitations. Gascoigne wants me to go down with him to his father's rectory in August and see the country round there. But I think self-interest well understood will take me to Topping Abbey, for Sir Hugo has invited me, and proposes—God bless him for his rashness!—that I should make a picture of his three daughters sitting on a bank—as he says, in the Gainsborough style. He came to my studio the other day and recommended me to apply myself to portrait. Of course I know what that means.—"My good fellow, your attempts at the historic and poetic are simply pitiable. Your brush is just that of a successful portrait-painter—it has a little truth and a great facility in falsehood—your idealism will never do for gods and goddesses and heroic story, but it may fetch a high price as flattery. Fate, my friend, has made you the hinder

wheel—*rota posterior curras, et in axe secundo*—run behind, because you can't help it."—What great effort it evidently costs our friends to give us these candid opinions! I have even known a man take the trouble to call, in order to tell me that I had irretrievably exposed my want of judgment in treating my subject, and that if I had asked him he would have lent me his own judgment. Such was my ingratitude and my readiness at composition, that even while he was speaking I inwardly sketched a Last Judgment with that candid friend's physiognomy on the left. But all this is away from Sir Hugo, whose manner of implying that one's gifts are not of the highest order is so exceedingly good-natured and comfortable that I begin to feel it an advantage not to be among those poor fellows at the tip-top. And his kindness to me tastes all the better because it comes out of his love for you, old boy. His chat is uncommonly amusing. By the way, he told me that your Vandyke duchess is gone with her husband yachting to the Mediterranean. I bethink me that it is possible to land from a yacht, or to be taken on to a yacht from the land. Shall you by chance have an opportunity of continuing your theological discussion with the fair Supralapsarian—I think you said her tenets were of that complexion? Is Duke Alphonso also theological?—perhaps an Arian who objects to triplicity. (Stage direction. While D. is reading, a profound scorn gathers in his face till at the last word he flings down the letter, grasps his coat-collar in a statuesque attitude and so remains with a look

generally tremendous, throughout the following soliloquy, "O night, O blackness, &c. &c.")

Excuse the brevity of this letter. You are not used to more from me than a bare statement of facts, without comment or digression. One fact I have omitted—that the Klesmers on the eve of departure have behaved magnificently, shining forth as might be expected from the planets of genius and fortune in conjunction. Mirah is rich with their oriental gifts.

What luck it will be if you come back and present yourself at the Abbey while I am there! I am going to behave with consummate discretion and win golden opinions. But I shall run up to town now and then, just for a peep into Gan Eden. You see how far I have got in Hebrew lore—up with my Lord Bolingbroke, who knew no Hebrew, but "understood that sort of learning and what is writ about it." If Mirah commanded, I would go to a depth below the tri-literal roots. Already it makes no difference to me whether the points are there or not. But while her brother's life lasts I suspect she would not listen to a lover, even one whose "hair is like a flock of goats on Mount Gilead"—and I flatter myself that few heads would bear that trying comparison better than mine. So I stay with my hope among the orchard-blossoms.—Your devoted

HANS MEYRICK.

Some months before, this letter from Hans would have divided Deronda's thoughts irritatingly: its romancing about Mirah would have had an unpleasant edge, scarcely anointed with any commisera-

tion for his friend's probable disappointment. But things had altered since March. Mirah was no longer so critically placed with regard to the Meyricks, and Deronda's own position had been undergoing a change which had just been crowned by the revelation of his birth. The new opening towards the future, though he would not trust in any definite visions, inevitably shed new lights, and influenced his mood towards past and present; hence, what Hans called his hope now seemed to Deronda, not a mischievous unreasonableness which roused his indignation, but an unusually persistent bird-dance of an extravagant fancy, and he would have felt quite able to pity any consequent suffering of his friend's, if he had believed in the suffering as probable. But some of the busy thought filling that long day, which passed without his receiving any new summons from his mother, was given to the argument that Hans Meyrick's nature was not one in which love could strike the deep roots that turn disappointment into sorrow: it was too restless, too readily excitable by novelty, too ready to turn itself into imaginative material, and wear its grief as a fantastic costume. "Already he is beginning to play at love: he is taking the whole affair as a comedy," said Deronda to himself; "he knows very well that there is no chance for him. Just like him —never opening his eyes on any possible objection I could have to receive his outpourings about Mirah. Poor old Hans! If we were under a fiery hail together he would howl like a Greek, and if I did not howl too it would never occur to him that I was as

badly off as he. And yet he is tender-hearted and affectionate in intention, and I can't say that he is not active in imagining what goes on in other people —but then he always imagines it to fit his own inclination."

With this touch of causticity Deronda got rid of the slight heat at present raised by Hans's *naïve* expansiveness. The nonsense about Gwendolen, conveying the fact that she was gone yachting with her husband, only suggested a disturbing sequel to his own strange parting with her. But there was one sentence in the letter which raised a more immediate, active anxiety. Hans's suspicion of a hidden sadness in Mirah was not in the direction of his wishes, and hence, instead of distrusting his observation here, Deronda began to conceive a cause for the sadness. Was it some event that had occurred during his absence, or only the growing fear of some event? Was it something, perhaps alterable, in the new position which had been made for her? Or—had Mordecai, against his habitual resolve, communicated to her those peculiar cherished hopes about him, Deronda, and had her quickly sensitive nature been hurt by the discovery that her brother's will or tenacity of visionary conviction had acted coercively on their friendship—been hurt by the fear that there was more of pitying self-suppression than of equal regard in Deronda's relation to him? For amidst all Mirah's quiet renunciation, the evident thirst of soul with which she received the tribute of equality implied a corresponding pain if she found that what she had taken for a purely

reverential regard towards her brother had its mixture of condescension.

In this last conjecture of Deronda's he was not wrong as to the quality in Mirah's nature on which he was founding—the latent protest against the treatment she had all her life been subject to until she met him. For that gratitude which would not let her pass by any notice of their acquaintance without insisting on the depth of her debt to him, took half its fervour from the keen comparison with what others had thought enough to render to her. Deronda's affinity in feeling enabled him to penetrate such secrets. But he was not near the truth in admitting the idea that Mordecai had broken his characteristic reticence. To no soul but Deronda himself had he yet breathed the history of their relation to each other, or his confidence about his friend's origin: it was not only that these subjects were for him too sacred to be spoken of without weighty reason, but that he had discerned Deronda's shrinking at any mention of his birth; and the severity of reserve which had hindered Mordecai from answering a question on a private affair of the Cohen family told yet more strongly here.

"Ezra, how is it?" Mirah one day said to him—"I am continually going to speak to Mr Deronda as if he were a Jew?"

He smiled at her quietly, and said, "I suppose it is because he treats us as if he were our brother. But he loves not to have the difference of birth dwelt upon."

"He has never lived with his parents, Mr Hans says," continued Mirah, to whom this was necessarily a question of interest about every one for whom she had a regard.

"Seek not to know such things from Mr Hans," said Mordecai, gravely, laying his hand on her curls, as he was wont. "What Daniel Deronda wishes us to know about himself is for him to tell us."

And Mirah felt herself rebuked, as Deronda had done. But to be rebuked in this way by Mordecai made her rather proud.

"I see no one so great as my brother," she said to Mrs Meyrick one day that she called at the Chelsea house on her way home, and, according to her hope, found the little mother alone. "It is difficult to think that he belongs to the same world as those people I used to live amongst. I told you once that they made life seem like a madhouse; but when I am with Ezra he makes me feel that his life is a great good, though he has suffered so much; not like me, who wanted to die because I had suffered a little, and only for a little while. His soul is so full, it is impossible for him to wish for death as I did. I get the same sort of feeling from him that I got yesterday, when I was tired, and came home through the park after the sweet rain had fallen and the sunshine lay on the grass and flowers. Everything in the sky and under the sky looked so pure and beautiful that the weariness and trouble and folly seemed only a small part of what is, and I became more patient and hopeful."

A dove-like note of melancholy in this speech caused Mrs Meyrick to look at Mirah with new examination. After laying down her hat and pushing her curls flat, with an air of fatigue, she had placed herself on a chair opposite her friend in her habitual attitude, her feet and hands just crossed: and at a distance she might have seemed a coloured statue of serenity. But Mrs Meyrick discerned a new look of suppressed suffering in her face, which corresponded to the hint that to be patient and hopeful required some extra influence.

"Is there any fresh trouble on your mind, my dear?" said Mrs Meyrick, giving up her needlework as a sign of concentrated attention.

Mirah hesitated before she said, "I am too ready to speak of troubles, I think. It seems unkind to put anything painful into other people's minds, unless one were sure it would hinder something worse. And perhaps I am too hasty and fearful."

"Oh, my dear, mothers are made to like pain and trouble for the sake of their children. Is it because the singing lessons are so few, and are likely to fall off when the season comes to an end? Success in these things can't come all at once." Mrs Meyrick did not believe that she was touching the real grief; but a guess that could be corrected would make an easier channel for confidence.

"No, not that," said Mirah, shaking her head gently. "I have been a little disappointed because so many ladies said they wanted me to give them or their daughters lessons, and then I never heard of

them again. But perhaps after the holidays I shall teach in some schools. Besides, you know, I am as rich as a princess now. I have not touched the hundred pounds that Mrs Klesmer gave me; and I should never be afraid that Ezra would be in want of anything, because there is Mr Deronda, and he said, 'It is the chief honour of my life that your brother will share anything with me.' Oh no! Ezra and I can have no fears for each other about such things as food and clothing."

"But there is some other fear on your mind," said Mrs Meyrick, not without divination—"a fear of something that may disturb your peace? Don't be forecasting evil, dear child, unless it is what you can guard against. Anxiety is good for nothing if we can't turn it into a defence. But there's no defence against all the things that might be. Have you any more reason for being anxious now than you had a month ago?"

"Yes, I have," said Mirah. "I have kept it from Ezra. I have not dared to tell him. Pray forgive me that I can't do without telling you. I *have* more reason for being anxious. It is five days ago now. I am quite sure I saw my father."

Mrs Meyrick shrank into smaller space, packing her arms across her chest and leaning forward—to hinder herself from pelting that father with her worst epithets.

"The year has changed him," Mirah went on. "He had already been much altered and worn in the time before I left him. You remember I said *how* he used sometimes to cry. He was always

excited one way or the other. I have told Ezra everything that I told you, and he says that my father had taken to gambling, which makes people easily distressed, and then again exalted. And now —it was only a moment that I saw him—his face was more haggard, and his clothes were shabby. He was with a much worse-looking man, who carried something, and they were hurrying along after an omnibus."

"Well, child, he did not see you, I hope?"

"No. I had just come from Mrs Raymond's, and I was waiting to cross near the Marble Arch. Soon he was on the omnibus and gone out of sight. It was a dreadful moment. My old life seemed to have come back again, and it was worse than it had ever been before. And I could not help feeling it a new deliverance that he was gone out of sight without knowing that I was there. And yet it hurt me that I was feeling so—it seemed hateful in me—almost like words I once had to speak in a play, that 'I had warmed my hands in the blood of my kindred.' For where might my father be going? What may become of him? And his having a daughter who would own him in spite of all, might have hindered the worst. Is there any pain like seeing what ought to be the best things in life turned into the worst? All those opposite feelings were meeting and pressing against each other, and took up all my strength. No one could act that. Acting is slow and poor to what we go through within. I don't know how I called a cab. I only remember that I was in it when I

began to think, 'I cannot tell Ezra; he must not know.'"

"You are afraid of grieving him?" Mrs Meyrick asked, when Mirah had paused a little.

"Yes—and there is something more," said Mirah, hesitatingly, as if she were examining her feeling before she would venture to speak of it. "I want to tell you; I could not tell any one else. I could not have told my own mother; I should have closed it up before her. I feel shame for my father, and it is perhaps strange—but the shame is greater before Ezra than before any one else in the world. He desired me to tell him all about my life, and I obeyed him. But it is always like a smart to me to know that those things about my father are in Ezra's mind. And—can you believe it?—when the thought haunts me how it would be if my father were to come and show himself before us both, what seems as if it would scorch me most is seeing my father shrinking before Ezra. That is the truth. I don't know whether it is a right feeling. But I can't help thinking that I would rather try to maintain my father in secret, and bear a great deal in that way, if I could hinder him from meeting my brother."

"You must not encourage that feeling, Mirah," said Mrs Meyrick, hastily. "It would be very dangerous; it would be wrong. You must not have concealments of that sort."

"But ought I now to tell Ezra that I have seen my father?" said Mirah, with deprecation in her tone.

"No," Mrs Meyrick answered, dubitatively. "I don't know that it is necessary to do that. Your father may go away with the birds. It is not clear that he came after you; you may never see him again. And then your brother will have been spared a useless anxiety. But promise me that if your father sees you—gets hold of you in any way again—you will let us all know. Promise me that solemnly, Mirah. I have a right to ask it."

Mirah reflected a little, then leaned forward to put her hands in Mrs Meyrick's, and said, "Since you ask it, I do promise. I will bear this feeling of shame. I have been so long used to think that I must bear that sort of inward pain. But the shame for my father burns me more when I think of his meeting Ezra." She was silent a moment or two, and then said, in a new tone of yearning compassion, "And we are his children—and he was once young like us—and my mother loved him. Oh! I cannot help seeing it all close, and it hurts me like a cruelty."

Mirah shed no tears: the discipline of her whole life had been against indulgence in such manifestation, which soon falls under the control of strong motives; but it seemed that the more intense expression of sorrow had entered into her voice. Mrs Meyrick, with all her quickness and loving insight, did not quite understand that filial feeling in Mirah which had active roots deep below her indignation for the worst offences. She could conceive that a mother would have a clinging pity and shame

for a reprobate son, but she was out of patience with what she held an exaggerated susceptibility on behalf of this father, whose reappearance inclined her to wish him under the care of a turnkey. Mirah's promise, however, was some security against her weakness.

That incident was the only reason that Mirah herself could have stated for the hidden sadness which Hans had divined. Of one element in her changed mood she could have given no definite account: it was something as dim as the sense of approaching weather-change, and had extremely slight external promptings, such as we are often ashamed to find all we can allege in support of the busy constructions that go on within us, not only without effort but even against it, under the influence of any blind emotional stirring. Perhaps the first leaven of uneasiness was laid by Gwendolen's behaviour on that visit which was entirely superfluous as a means of engaging Mirah to sing, and could have no other motive than the excited and strange questioning about Deronda. Mirah had instinctively kept the visit a secret, but the active remembrance of it had raised a new susceptibility in her, and made her alive as she had never been before to the relations Deronda must have with that society which she herself was getting frequent glimpses of without belonging to it. Her peculiar life and education had produced in her an extraordinary mixture of unworldliness, with knowledge of the world's evil, and even this knowledge was a strange blending of direct observation with the

effects of reading and theatrical study. Her memory was furnished with abundant passionate situation and intrigue, which she never made emotionally her own, but felt a repelled aloofness from, as she had done from the actual life around her. Some of that imaginative knowledge began now to weave itself around Mrs Grandcourt; and though Mirah would admit no position likely to affect her reverence for Deronda, she could not avoid a new painfully vivid association of his general life with a world away from her own, where there might be some involvement of his feeling and action with a woman like Gwendolen, who was increasingly repugnant to her — increasingly, even after she had ceased to see her; for liking and disliking can grow in meditation as fast as in the more immediate kind of presence. Any disquietude consciously due to the idea that Deronda's deepest care might be for something remote not only from herself but even from his friendship for her brother, she would have checked with rebuking questions: —What was she but one who had shared his generous kindness with many others? and his attachment to her brother, was it not begun late to be soon ended? Other ties had come before, and others would remain after this had been cut by swift-coming death. But her uneasiness had not reached that point of self-recognition in which she would have been ashamed of it as an indirect, presumptuous claim on Deronda's feeling. That she or any one else should think of him as her possible lover was a conception which had never entered her

mind; indeed it was equally out of the question with Mrs Meyrick and the girls, who with Mirah herself regarded his intervention in her life as something exceptional, and were so impressed by his mission as her deliverer and guardian that they would have held it an offence to hint at his holding any other relation towards her: a point of view which Hans also had readily adopted. It is a little hard upon some men that they appear to sink for us in becoming lovers. But precisely to this innocence of the Meyricks was owing the disturbance of Mirah's unconsciousness. The first occasion could hardly have been more trivial, but it prepared her emotive nature for a deeper effect from what happened afterwards.

It was when Anna Gascoigne, visiting the Meyricks, was led to speak of her cousinship with Gwendolen. The visit had been arranged that Anna might see Mirah; the three girls were at home with their mother, and there was naturally a flux of talk among six feminine creatures, free from the presence of a distorting male standard. Anna Gascoigne felt herself much at home with the Meyrick girls, who knew what it was to have a brother, and to be generally regarded as of minor importance in the world; and she had told Rex that she thought the University very nice, because brothers made friends there whose families were not rich and grand, and yet (like the University) were very nice. The Meyricks seemed to her almost alarmingly clever, and she consulted them much on the best mode of teaching Lotta, confid-

ing to them that she herself was the least clever of her family. Mirah had lately come in, and there was a complete bouquet of young faces round the tea-table — Hafiz, seated a little aloft with large eyes on the alert, regarding the whole scene as an apparatus for supplying his allowance of milk.

"Think of our surprise, Mirah," said Kate. "We were speaking of Mr Deronda and the Mallingers, and it turns out that Miss Gascoigne knows them."

"I only know about them," said Anna, a little flushed with excitement, what she had heard and now saw of the lovely Jewess being an almost startling novelty to her. "I have not even seen them. But some months ago, my cousin married Sir Hugo Mallinger's nephew, Mr Grandcourt, who lived in Sir Hugo's place at Diplow, near us."

"There!" exclaimed Mab, clasping her hands. "Something must come of that. Mrs Grandcourt, the Vandyke duchess, is your cousin?"

"Oh yes; I was her bridesmaid," said Anna. "Her mamma and mine are sisters. My aunt was much richer before last year, but then she and mamma lost all their fortune. Papa is a clergyman, you know, so it makes very little difference to us, except that we keep no carriage, and have no dinner-parties—and I like it better. But it was very sad for poor Aunt Davilow, for she could not live with us, because she has four daughters besides Gwendolen; but then, when she married Mr Grandcourt, it did not signify so much, because of his being so rich."

"Oh, this finding out relationships is delightful!"

said Mab. "It is like a Chinese puzzle that one has to fit together. I feel sure something wonderful may be made of it, but I can't tell what."

"Dear me, Mab!" said Amy, "relationships must branch out. The only difference is, that we happen to know some of the people concerned. Such things are going on every day."

"And pray, Amy, why do you insist on the number nine being so wonderful?" said Mab. "I am sure that is happening every day. Never mind, Miss Gascoigne; please go on. And Mr Deronda?—have you never seen Mr Deronda? You *must* bring him in."

"No, I have not seen him," said Anna; "but he was at Diplow before my cousin was married, and I have heard my aunt speaking of him to papa. She said what you have been saying about him—only not so much: I mean, about Mr Deronda living with Sir Hugo Mallinger, and being so nice, she thought. We talk a great deal about every one who comes near Pennicote, because it is so seldom there is any one new. But I remember, when I asked Gwendolen what she thought of Mr Deronda, she said, 'Don't mention it, Anna; but I think his hair is dark.' That was her droll way of answering; she was always so lively. It is really rather wonderful that I should come to hear so much about him, all through Mr Hans knowing Rex, and then my having the pleasure of knowing you," Anna ended, looking at Mrs Meyrick with a shy grace.

"The pleasure is on our side too; but the wonder would have been, if you had come to this house

without hearing of Mr Deronda—wouldn't it, Mirah?" said Mrs Meyrick.

Mirah smiled acquiescently, but had nothing to say. A confused discontent took possession of her at the mingling of names and images to which she had been listening.

"My son calls Mrs Grandcourt the Vandyke duchess," continued Mrs Meyrick, turning again to Anna; "he thinks her so striking and picturesque."

"Yes," said Anna. "Gwendolen was always so beautiful—people fell dreadfully in love with her. I thought it a pity, because it made them unhappy."

"And how do you like Mr Grandcourt, the happy lover?" said Mrs Meyrick, who, in her way, was as much interested as Mab in the hints she had been hearing of vicissitude in the life of a widow with daughters.

"Papa approved of Gwendolen's accepting him, and my aunt says he is very generous," said Anna, beginning with a virtuous intention of repressing her own sentiments; but then, unable to resist a rare occasion for speaking them freely, she went on—"else I should have thought he was not very nice—rather proud, and not at all lively, like Gwendolen. I should have thought some one younger and more lively would have suited her better. But, perhaps, having a brother who seems to us better than any one makes us think worse of others."

"Wait till you see Mr Deronda," said Mab, nodding significantly. "Nobody's brother will do after him."

"Our brothers *must* do for people's husbands," said Kate, curtly, "because they will not get Mr Deronda. No woman will do for him to marry."

"No woman ought to want him to marry him," said Mab, with indignation. "*I* never should. Fancy finding out that he had a tailor's bill, and used boot-hooks, like Hans. Who ever thought of his marrying?"

"I have," said Kate. "When I drew a wedding for a frontispiece to 'Hearts and Diamonds,' I made a sort of likeness of him for the bridegroom, and I went about looking for a grand woman who would do for his countess, but I saw none that would not be poor creatures by the side of him."

"You should have seen this Mrs Grandcourt then," said Mrs Meyrick. "Hans says that she and Mr Deronda set each other off when they are side by side. She is tall and fair. But you know her, Mirah—you can always say something descriptive. What do *you* think of Mrs Grandcourt?"

"I think she is like the *Princess of Eboli* in *Don Carlos*," said Mirah, with a quick intensity. She was pursuing an association in her own mind not intelligible to her hearers—an association with a certain actress as well as the part she represented.

"Your comparison is a riddle for me, my dear," said Mrs Meyrick, smiling.

"You said that Mrs Grandcourt was tall and fair," continued Mirah, slightly paler. "That is quite true."

Mrs Meyrick's quick eye and ear detected something unusual, but immediately explained it to her-

self. Fine ladies had often wounded Mirah by caprices of manner and intention.

"Mrs Grandcourt had thought of having lessons from Mirah," she said, turning to Anna. "But many have talked of having lessons, and then have found no time. Fashionable ladies have too much work to do."

And the chat went on without further insistance on the *Princess of Eboli*. That comparison escaped Mirah's lips under the urgency of a pang unlike anything she had felt before. The conversation from the beginning had revived unpleasant impressions, and Mrs Meyrick's suggestion of Gwendolen's figure by the side of Deronda's had the stinging effect of a voice outside her, confirming her secret conviction that this tall and fair woman had some hold on his lot. For a long while afterwards she felt as if she had had a jarring shock through her frame.

In the evening, putting her cheek against her brother's shoulder as she was sitting by him, while he sat propped up in bed under a new difficulty of breathing, she said—

"Ezra, does it ever hurt your love for Mr Deronda that so much of his life was all hidden away from you,—that he is amongst persons and cares about persons who are all so unlike us—I mean, unlike you?"

"No, assuredly no," said Mordecai. "Rather, it is a precious thought to me that he has a preparation which I lacked, and is an accomplished Egyptian." Then, recollecting that his words had a reference

which his sister must not yet understand, he added, "I have the more to give him, since his treasure differs from mine. That is a blessedness in friendship."

Mirah mused a little.

"Still," she said, "it would be a trial to your love for him if that other part of his life were like a crowd in which he had got entangled, so that he was carried away from you—I mean in his thoughts, and not merely carried out of sight as he is now—and not merely for a little while, but continually. How should you bear that? Our religion commands us to bear. But how should you bear it?"

"Not well, my sister—not well; but it will never happen," said Mordecai, looking at her with a tender smile. He thought that her heart needed comfort on his account.

Mirah said no more. She mused over the difference between her own state of mind and her brother's, and felt her comparative pettiness. Why could she not be completely satisfied with what satisfied his larger judgment? She gave herself no fuller reason than a painful sense of unfitness—in what? Airy possibilities to which she could give no outline, but to which one name and one figure gave the wandering persistency of a blot in her vision. Here lay the vaguer source of the hidden sadness rendered noticeable to Hans by some diminution of that sweet ease, that ready joyousness of response in her speech and smile, which had come with the new sense of freedom and safety, and had made her presence like the freshly-opened daisies and clear bird-notes after

the rain. She herself regarded her uneasiness as a sort of ingratitude and dulness of sensibility towards the great things that had been given her in her new life; and whenever she threw more energy than usual into her singing, it was the energy of indignation against the shallowness of her own content. In that mood she once said, "Shall I tell you what is the difference between you and me, Ezra? You are a spring in the drought, and I am an acorn-cup; the waters of heaven fill me, but the least little shake leaves me empty."

"Why, what has shaken thee?" said Mordecai. He fell into this antique form of speech habitually in talking to his sister and to the Cohen children.

"Thoughts," said Mirah; "thoughts that come like the breeze and shake me—bad people, wrong things, misery—and how they might touch our life."

"We must take our portion, Mirah. It is there. On whose shoulder would we lay it, that we might be free?"

The one voluntary sign that she made of her inward care was this distant allusion.

CHAPTER LIII.

"My desolation does begin to make
A better life."
—SHAKESPEARE: *Antony and Cleopatra.*

BEFORE Deronda was summoned to a second interview with his mother, a day had passed in which she had only sent him a message to say that she was not yet well enough to receive him again; but on the third morning he had a note saying, "I leave to-day. Come and see me at once."

He was shown into the same room as before; but it was much darkened with blinds and curtains. The Princess was not there, but she presently entered, dressed in a loose wrap of some soft silk, in colour a dusky orange, her head again with black lace floating about it, her arms showing themselves bare from under her wide sleeves. Her face seemed even more impressive in the sombre light, the eyes larger, the lines more vigorous. You might have imagined her a sorceress who would stretch forth her wonderful hand and arm to mix youth-potions for others, but scorned to mix them for herself, having had enough of youth.

She put her arms on her son's shoulders at once, and kissed him on both cheeks, then seated herself among her cushions with an air of assured firmness and dignity unlike her fitfulness in their first interview, and told Deronda to sit down by her. He obeyed, saying, "You are quite relieved now, I trust?"

"Yes, I am at ease again. Is there anything more that you would like to ask me?" she said, with the manner of a queen rather than of a mother.

"Can I find the house in Genoa where you used to live with my grandfather?" said Deronda.

"No," she answered, with a deprecating movement of her arm, "it is pulled down—not to be found. But about our family, and where my father lived at various times—you will find all that among the papers in the chest, better than I can tell you. My father, I told you, was a physician. My mother was a Morteira. I used to hear all those things without listening. You will find them all. I was born amongst them without my will. I banished them as soon as I could."

Deronda tried to hide his pained feeling, and said, "Anything else that I should desire to know from you could only be what it is some satisfaction to your own feeling to tell me."

"I think I have told you everything that could be demanded of me," said the Princess, looking coldly meditative. It seemed as if she had exhausted her emotion in their former interview. The fact was, she had said to herself, "I have done it all. I have confessed all. I will not go through it

again. I will save myself from agitation." And she was acting out that theme.

But to Deronda's nature the moment was cruel: it made the filial yearning of his life a disappointed pilgrimage to a shrine where there were no longer the symbols of sacredness. It seemed that all the woman lacking in her was present in him as he said, with some tremor in his voice—

"Then are we to part, and I never be anything to you?"

"It is better so," said the Princess, in a softer, mellower voice. "There could be nothing but hard duty for you, even if it were possible for you to take the place of my son. You would not love me. Don't deny it," she said, abruptly, putting up her hand. "I know what is the truth. You don't like what I did. You are angry with me. You think I robbed you of something. You are on your grandfather's side, and you will always have a condemnation of me in your heart."

Deronda felt himself under a ban of silence. He rose from his seat by her, preferring to stand, if he had to obey that imperious prohibition of any tenderness. But his mother now looked up at him with a new admiration in her glance, saying—

"You are wrong to be angry with me. You are the better for what I did." After pausing a little, she added, abruptly, "And now tell me what you shall do."

"Do you mean now, immediately," said Deronda; "or as to the course of my future life?"

"I mean in the future. What difference will it

make to you that I have told you about your birth?"

"A very great difference," said Deronda, emphatically. "I can hardly think of anything that would make a greater difference."

"What shall you do, then?" said the Princess, with more sharpness. "Make yourself just like your grandfather—be what he wished you—turn yourself into a Jew like him?"

"That is impossible. The effect of my education can never be done away with. The Christian sympathies in which my mind was reared can never die out of me," said Deronda, with increasing tenacity of tone. "But I consider it my duty—it is the impulse of my feeling—to identify myself, as far as possible, with my hereditary people, and if I can see any work to be done for them that I can give my soul and hand to I shall choose to do it."

His mother had her eyes fixed on him with a wondering speculation, examining his face as if she thought that by close attention she could read a difficult language there. He bore her gaze very firmly, sustained by a resolute opposition, which was the expression of his fullest self. She bent towards him a little, and said, with a decisive emphasis—

"You are in love with a Jewess."

Deronda coloured and said, "My reasons would be independent of any such fact."

"I know better. I have seen what men are," said the Princess, peremptorily. "Tell me the truth. She is a Jewess who will not accept any

one but a Jew. There *are* a few such," she added, with a touch of scorn.

Deronda had that objection to answer which we all have known in speaking to those who are too certain of their own fixed interpretations to be enlightened by anything we may say. But besides this, the point immediately in question was one on which he felt a repugnance either to deny or affirm. He remained silent, and she presently said—

"You love her as your father loved me, and she draws you after her as I drew him."

Those words touched Deronda's filial imagination, and some tenderness in his glance was taken by his mother as an assent. She went on with rising passion. "But I was leading him the other way. And now your grandfather is getting his revenge."

"Mother," said Deronda, remonstrantly, "don't let us think of it in that way. I will admit that there may come some benefit from the education you chose for me. I prefer cherishing the benefit with gratitude, to dwelling with resentment on the injury. I think it would have been right that I should have been brought up with the consciousness that I was a Jew, but it must always have been a good to me to have as wide an instruction and sympathy as possible. And now, you have restored me my inheritance—events have brought a fuller restitution than you could have made — you have been saved from robbing my people of my service and me of my duty: can you not bring your whole soul to consent to this?"

Deronda paused in his pleading: his mother

looked at him listeningly, as if the cadence of his voice were taking her ear, yet she shook her head slowly. He began again even more urgently.

"You have told me that you sought what you held the best for me: open your heart to relenting and love towards my grandfather, who sought what he held the best for you."

"Not for me, no," she said, shaking her head with more absolute denial, and folding her arms tightly. "I tell you, he never thought of his daughter except as an instrument. Because I had wants outside his purpose, I was to be put in a frame and tortured. If that is the right law for the world, I will not say that I love it. If my acts were wrong—if it is God who is exacting from me that I should deliver up what I withheld—who is punishing me because I deceived my father and did not warn him that I should contradict his trust—well, I have told everything. I have done what I could. And *your* soul consents. That is enough. I have after all been the instrument my father wanted.—'I desire a grandson who shall have a true Jewish heart. Every Jew should rear his family as if he hoped that a Deliverer might spring from it.'"

In uttering these last sentences the Princess narrowed her eyes, waved her head up and down, and spoke slowly with a new kind of chest-voice, as if she were quoting unwillingly.

"Were those my grandfather's words?" said Deronda.

"Yes, yes; and you will find them written. I wanted to thwart him," said the Princess, with a

sudden outburst of the passion she had shown in the former interview. Then she added more slowly, "You would have me love what I have hated from the time I was so high"—here she held her left hand a yard from the floor.—"That can never be. But what does it matter? His yoke has been on me, whether I loved it or not. You are the grandson he wanted. You speak as men do—as if you felt yourself wise. What does it all mean?"

Her tone was abrupt and scornful. Deronda, in his pained feeling, and under the solemn urgency of the moment, had to keep a clutching remembrance of their relationship, lest his words should become cruel. He began in a deep entreating tone.

"Mother, don't say that I feel myself wise. We are set in the midst of difficulties. I see no other way to get any clearness than by being truthful—not by keeping back facts which may—which should carry obligation within them—which should make the only guidance towards duty. No wonder if such facts come to reveal themselves in spite of concealments. The effects prepared by generations are likely to triumph over a contrivance which would bend them all to the satisfaction of self. Your will was strong, but my grandfather's trust which you accepted and did not fulfil—what you call his yoke—is the expression of something stronger, with deeper, farther-spreading roots, knit into the foundations of sacredness for all men. You renounced me—you still banish me—as a son"—there was an involuntary movement of indignation in Deronda's voice—"But that stronger Something has

determined that I shall be all the more the grandson whom also you willed to annihilate."

His mother was watching him fixedly, and again her face gathered admiration. After a moment's silence she said, in a low persuasive tone—

"Sit down again," and he obeyed, placing himself beside her. She laid her hand on his shoulder and went on.

"You rebuke me. Well—I am the loser. And you are angry because I banish you. What could you do for me but weary your own patience? Your mother is a shattered woman. My sense of life is little more than a sense of what was—except when the pain is present. You reproach me that I parted with you. I had joy enough without you then. Now you are come back to me, and I cannot make you a joy. Have you the cursing spirit of the Jew in you? Are you not able to forgive me? Shall you be glad to think that I am punished because I was not a Jewish mother to you?"

"How can you ask me that?" said Deronda, remonstrantly. "Have I not besought you that I might now at least be a son to you? My grief is that you have declared me helpless to comfort you. I would give up much that is dear for the sake of soothing your anguish."

"You shall give up nothing," said his mother, with the hurry of agitation. "You shall be happy. You shall let me think of you as happy. I shall have done you no harm. You have no reason to curse me. You shall feel for me as they feel for the dead whom they say prayers for—you shall

long that I may be freed from all suffering—from all punishment. And I shall see you instead of always seeing your grandfather. Will any harm come to me because I broke his trust in the daylight after he was gone into darkness? I cannot tell:—if you think *Kaddish* will help me—say it, say it. You will come between me and the dead. When I am in your mind, you will look as you do now—always as if you were a tender son,—always—as if I had been a tender mother."

She seemed resolved that her agitation should not conquer her, but he felt her hand trembling on his shoulder. Deep, deep compassion hemmed in all words. With a face of beseeching he put his arm round her and pressed her head tenderly under his. They sat so for some moments. Then she lifted her head again and rose from her seat with a great sigh, as if in that breath she were dismissing a weight of thoughts. Deronda, standing in front of her, felt that the parting was near. But one of her swift alternations had come upon his mother.

"Is she beautiful?" she said, abruptly.

"Who?" said Deronda, changing colour.

"The woman you love."

It was not a moment for deliberate explanation. He was obliged to say, "Yes."

"Not ambitious?"

"No, I think not."

"Not one who must have a path of her own?"

"I think her nature is not given to make great claims."

"She is not like that?" said the Princess, taking

from her wallet a miniature with jewels round it, and holding it before her son. It was her own in all the fire of youth, and as Deronda looked at it with admiring sadness, she said, "Had I not a rightful claim to be something more than a mere daughter and mother? The voice and the genius matched the face. Whatever else was wrong, acknowledge that I had a right to be an artist, though my father's will was against it. My nature gave me a charter."

"I do acknowledge that," said Deronda, looking from the miniature to her face, which even in its worn pallor had an expression of living force beyond anything that the pencil could show.

"Will you take the portrait?" said the Princess, more gently. "If she is a kind woman teach her to think of me kindly."

"I shall be grateful for the portrait," said Deronda, "but—I ought to say, I have no assurance that she whom I love will have any love for me. I have kept silence."

"Who and what is she?" said the mother. The question seemed a command.

"She was brought up as a singer for the stage," said Deronda, with inward reluctance. "Her father took her away early from her mother, and her life has been unhappy. She is very young—only twenty. Her father wished to bring her up in disregard—even in dislike of her Jewish origin, but she has clung with all her affection to the memory of her mother and the fellowship of her people."

"Ah! like you. She is attached to the Judaïsm

she knows nothing of," said the Princess, peremptorily. "That is poetry — fit to last through an opera night. Is she fond of her artist's life — is her singing worth anything?"

"Her singing is exquisite. But her voice is not suited to the stage. I think that the artist's life has been made repugnant to her."

"Why, she is made for you, then. Sir Hugo said you were bitterly against being a singer, and I can see that you would never have let yourself be merged in a wife, as your father was."

"I repeat," said Deronda, emphatically—"I repeat that I have no assurance of her love for me, of the possibility that we can ever be united. Other things —painful issues may lie before me. I have always felt that I should prepare myself to renounce, not cherish that prospect. But I suppose I might feel so of happiness in general. Whether it may come or not, one should try and prepare one's self to do without it."

"Do you feel in that way?" said his mother, laying her hands on his shoulders, and perusing his face, while she spoke in a low meditative tone, pausing between her sentences. "Poor boy! . . . I wonder how it would have been if I had kept you with me . . . whether you would have turned your heart to the old things . . . against mine . . . and we should have quarrelled . . . your grandfather would have been in you . . . and you would have hampered my life with your young growth from the old root."

"I think my affection might have lasted through

all our quarrelling," said Deronda, saddened more and more, "and that would not have hampered—surely it would have enriched your life."

"Not then, not then . . . I did not want it then . . . I might have been glad of it now," said the mother, with a bitter melancholy, "if I could have been glad of anything."

"But you love your other children, and they love you?" said Deronda, anxiously.

"Oh yes," she answered, as to a question about a matter of course, while she folded her arms again. "But," . . . she added in a deeper tone, . . . "I am not a loving woman. That is the truth. It is a talent to love—I lacked it. Others have loved me—and I have acted their love. I know very well what love makes of men and women—it is subjection. It takes another for a larger self, enclosing this one,"—she pointed to her own bosom. "I was never willingly subject to any man. Men have been subject to me."

"Perhaps the man who was subject was the happier of the two," said Deronda—not with a smile, but with a grave, sad sense of his mother's privation.

"Perhaps—but I *was* happy—for a few years I was happy. If I had not been afraid of defeat and failure, I might have gone on. I miscalculated. What then? It is all over. Another life! Men talk of 'another life,' as if it only began on the other side of the grave. I have long entered on another life." With the last words she raised her arms till they were bare to the elbow, her brow

was contracted in one deep fold, her eyes were closed, her voice was smothered: in her dusky flame-coloured garment, she looked like a dreamed visitant from some region of departed mortals.

Deronda's feeling was wrought to a pitch of acuteness in which he was no longer quite master of himself. He gave an audible sob. His mother, opening her eyes, and letting her hands again rest on his shoulders, said—

"Good-bye, my son, good-bye. We shall hear no more of each other. Kiss me."

He clasped his arms round her neck, and they kissed each other.

Deronda did not know how he got out of the room. He felt an older man. All his boyish yearnings and anxieties about his mother had vanished. He had gone through a tragic experience which must for ever solemnise his life and deepen the significance of the acts by which he bound himself to others.

CHAPTER LIV.

"The unwilling brain
Feigns often what it would not; and we trust
Imagination with such phantasies
As the tongue dares not fashion into words;
Which have no words, their horror makes them dim
To the mind's eye."

—SHELLEY.

MADONNA PIA, whose husband, feeling himself injured by her, took her to his castle amid the swampy flats of the Maremma and got rid of her there, makes a pathetic figure in Dante's Purgatory, among the sinners who repented at the last and desire to be remembered compassionately by their fellow-countrymen. We know little about the grounds of mutual discontent between the Siennese couple, but we may infer with some confidence that the husband had never been a very delightful companion, and that on the flats of the Maremma his disagreeable manners had a background which threw them out remarkably; whence in his desire to punish his wife to the uttermost, the nature of things was so far against him that in relieving himself of her he could not avoid making the relief mutual. And thus, without

any hardness to the poor Tuscan lady who had her deliverance long ago, one may feel warranted in thinking of her with a less sympathetic interest than of the better known Gwendolen who, instead of being delivered from her errors on earth and cleansed from their effect in purgatory, is at the very height of her entanglement in those fatal meshes which are woven within more closely than without, and often make the inward torture disproportionate to what is discernible as outward cause.

In taking his wife with him on a yachting expedition, Grandcourt had no intention to get rid of her; on the contrary, he wanted to feel more securely that she was his to do as he liked with, and to make her feel it also. Moreover, he was himself very fond of yachting: its dreamy do-nothing absolutism, unmolested by social demands, suited his disposition, and he did not in the least regard it as an equivalent for the dreariness of the Maremma. He had his reasons for carrying Gwendolen out of reach, but they were not reasons that can seem black in the mere statement. He suspected a growing spirit of opposition in her, and his feeling about the sentimental inclination she betrayed for Deronda was what in another man he would have called jealousy. In himself it seemed merely a resolution to put an end to such foolery as must have been going on in that prearranged visit of Deronda's which he had divined and interrupted.

And Grandcourt might have pleaded that he was perfectly justified in taking care that his wife should fulfil the obligations she had accepted. Her mar-

riage was a contract where all the ostensible advantages were on her side, and it was only one of those advantages that her husband should use his power to hinder her from any injurious self-committal or unsuitable behaviour. He knew quite well that she had not married him—had not overcome her repugnance to certain facts—out of love to him personally; he had won her by the rank and luxuries he had to give her, and these she had got: he had fulfilled his side of the contract.

And Gwendolen, we know, was thoroughly aware of the situation. She could not excuse herself by saying that there had been a tacit part of the contract on her side—namely, that she meant to rule and have her own way. With all her early indulgence in the disposition to dominate, she was not one of the narrow-brained women who through life regard all their own selfish demands as rights, and every claim upon themselves as an injury. She had a root of conscience in her, and the process of purgatory had begun for her on the green earth: she knew that she had been wrong.

But now enter into the soul of this young creature as she found herself, with the blue Mediterranean dividing her from the world, on the tiny plank-island of a yacht, the domain of the husband to whom she felt that she had sold herself, and had been paid the strict price—nay, paid more than she had dared to ask in the handsome maintenance of her mother:—the husband to whom she had sold her truthfulness and sense of justice, so that he held them throttled into silence, collared and dragged

behind him to witness what he would, without remonstrance.

What had she to complain of? The yacht was of the prettiest; the cabin fitted up to perfection, smelling of cedar, soft-cushioned, hung with silk, expanded with mirrors; the crew such as suited an elegant toy, one of them having even ringlets, as well as a bronze complexion and fine teeth; and Mr Lush was not there, for he had taken his way back to England as soon as he had seen all and everything on board. Moreover, Gwendolen herself liked the sea: it did not make her ill; and to observe the rigging of the vessel and forecast the necessary adjustments was a sort of amusement that might have gratified her activity and enjoyment of imaginary rule; the weather was fine, and they were coasting southward, where even the rain-furrowed, heat-cracked clay becomes gem-like with purple shadows, and where one may float between blue and blue in an open-eyed dream that the world has done with sorrow.

But what can still that hunger of the heart which sickens the eye for beauty, and makes sweet-scented ease an oppression? What sort of Moslem paradise would quiet the terrible fury of moral repulsion and cowed resistance which, like an eating pain intensifying into torture, concentrates the mind in that poisonous misery? While Gwendolen, throned on her cushions at evening, and beholding the glory of sea and sky softening as if with boundless love around her, was hoping that Grandcourt in his march up and down was not going to pause near

her, not going to look at her or speak to her, some woman under a smoky sky, obliged to consider the price of eggs in arranging her dinner, was listening for the music of a footstep that would remove all risk from her foretaste of joy; some couple, bending, cheek by cheek, over a bit of work done by the one and delighted in by the other, were reckoning the earnings that would make them rich enough for a holiday among the furze and heather.

Had Grandcourt the least conception of what was going on in the breast of this wife? He conceived that she did not love him: but was that necessary? She was under his power, and he was not accustomed to soothe himself, as some cheerfully-disposed persons are, with the conviction that he was very generally and justly beloved. But what lay quite away from his conception was, that she could have any special repulsion for him personally. How could she? He himself knew what personal repulsion was—nobody better: his mind was much furnished with a sense of what brutes his fellow-creatures were, both masculine and feminine; what odious familiarities they had, what smirks, what modes of flourishing their handkerchiefs, what costume, what lavender water, what bulging eyes, and what foolish notions of making themselves agreeable by remarks which were not wanted. In this critical view of mankind there was an affinity between him and Gwendolen before their marriage, and we know that she had been attractingly wrought upon by the refined negations he presented to her. Hence he understood her repulsion for Lush. But how was

he to understand or conceive her present repulsion for Henleigh Grandcourt? Some men bring themselves to believe, and not merely maintain, the non-existence of an external world; a few others believe themselves objects of repulsion to a woman without being told so in plain language. But Grandcourt did not belong to this eccentric body of thinkers. He had all his life had reason to take a flattering view of his own attractiveness, and to place himself in fine antithesis to the men who, he saw at once, must be revolting to a woman of taste. He had no idea of a moral repulsion, and could not have believed, if he had been told it, that there may be a resentment and disgust which will gradually make beauty more detestable than ugliness, through exasperation at that outward virtue in which hateful things can flaunt themselves or find a supercilious advantage.

How, then, could Grandcourt divine what was going on in Gwendolen's breast?

For their behaviour to each other scandalised no observer — not even the foreign maid warranted against sea-sickness; nor Grandcourt's own experienced valet; still less the picturesque crew, who regarded them as a model couple in high life. Their companionship consisted chiefly in a well-bred silence. Grandcourt had no humorous observations at which Gwendolen could refuse to smile, no chit-chat to make small occasions of dispute. He was perfectly polite in arranging an additional garment over her when needful, and in handing her any object that he perceived her to need, and she could

not fall into the vulgarity of accepting or rejecting such politeness rudely.

Grandcourt put up his telescope and said, "There's a plantation of sugar-canes at the foot of that rock: should you like to look?"

Gwendolen said, "Yes, please," remembering that she must try and interest herself in sugar-canes as something outside her personal affairs. Then Grandcourt would walk up and down and smoke for a long while, pausing occasionally to point out a sail on the horizon, and at last would seat himself and look at Gwendolen with his narrow, immovable gaze, as if she were part of the complete yacht; while she, conscious of being looked at, was exerting her ingenuity not to meet his eyes. At dinner he would remark that the fruit was getting stale, and they must put in somewhere for more; or, observing that she did not drink the wine, he asked her if she would like any other kind better. A lady was obliged to respond to these things suitably; and even if she had not shrunk from quarrelling on other grounds, quarrelling with Grandcourt was impossible: she might as well have made angry remarks to a dangerous serpent ornamentally coiled in her cabin without invitation. And what sort of dispute could a woman of any pride and dignity begin on a yacht?

Grandcourt had an intense satisfaction in leading his wife captive after this fashion: it gave their life on a small scale a royal representation and publicity in which everything familiar was got rid of, and everybody must do what was expected of

them whatever might be their private protest—the protest (kept strictly private) adding to the piquancy of despotism.

To Gwendolen, who even in the freedom of her maiden time had had very faint glimpses of any heroism or sublimity, the medium that now thrust itself everywhere before her view was this husband and her relation to him. The beings closest to us, whether in love or hate, are often virtually our interpreters of the world, and some feather-headed gentleman or lady whom in passing we regret to take as legal tender for a human being may be acting as a melancholy theory of life in the minds of those who live with them—like a piece of yellow and wavy glass that distorts form and makes colour an affliction. Their trivial sentences, their petty standards, their low suspicions, their loveless *ennui*, may be making somebody else's life no better than a promenade through a pantheon of ugly idols. Gwendolen had that kind of window before her, affecting the distant equally with the near. Some unhappy wives are soothed by the possibility that they may become mothers; but Gwendolen felt that to desire a child for herself would have been a consenting to the completion of the injury she had been guilty of. She was reduced to dread lest she should become a mother. It was not the image of a new sweetly-budding life that came as a vision of deliverance from the monotony of distaste: it was an image of another sort. In the irritable, fluctuating stages of despair, gleams of hope came in the form of some possible

accident. To dwell on the benignity of accident was a refuge from worse temptation.

The embitterment of hatred is often as unaccountable to onlookers as the growth of devoted love, and it not only seems but is really out of direct relation with any outward causes to be alleged. Passion is of the nature of seed, and finds nourishment within, tending to a predominance which determines all currents towards itself, and makes the whole life its tributary. And the intensest form of hatred is that rooted in fear, which compels to silence and drives vehemence into a constructive vindictiveness, an imaginary annihilation of the detested object, something like the hidden rites of vengeance with which the persecuted have made a dark vent for their rage, and soothed their suffering into dumbness. Such hidden rites went on in the secrecy of Gwendolen's mind, but not with soothing effect—rather with the effect of a struggling terror. Side by side with the dread of her husband had grown the self-dread which urged her to flee from the pursuing images wrought by her pent-up impulse. The vision of her past wrongdoing, and what it had brought on her, came with a pale ghastly illumination over every imagined deed that was a rash effort at freedom, such as she had made in her marriage. Moreover, she had learned to see all her acts through the impression they would make on Deronda: whatever relief might come to her, she could not sever it from the judgment of her that would be created in his mind. Not one word of flattery, of indulgence, of dependence on

her favour, could be fastened on by her in all their intercourse, to weaken his restraining power over her (in this way Deronda's effort over himself was repaid); and amid the dreary uncertainties of her spoiled life the possible remedies that lay in his mind, nay, the remedy that lay in her feeling for him, made her only hope. He seemed to her a terrible-browed angel from whom she could not think of concealing any deed so as to win an ignorant regard from him: it belonged to the nature of their relation that she should be truthful, for his power over her had begun in the raising of a self-discontent which could be satisfied only by genuine change. But in no concealment had she now any confidence: her vision of what she had to dread took more decidedly than ever the form of some fiercely impulsive deed, committed as in a dream that she would instantaneously wake from to find the effects real though the images had been false: to find death under her hands, but instead of darkness, daylight; instead of satisfied hatred, the dismay of guilt; instead of freedom, the palsy of a new terror—a white dead face from which she was for ever trying to flee and for ever held back. She remembered Deronda's words: they were continually recurring in her thought—

"Turn your fear into a safeguard. Keep your dread fixed on the idea of increasing your remorse. . . . Take your fear as a safeguard. It is like quickness of hearing. It may make consequences passionately present to you."

And so it was. In Gwendolen's consciousness

Temptation and Dread met and stared like two pale phantoms, each seeing itself in the other—each obstructed by its own image; and all the while her fuller self beheld the apparitions and sobbed for deliverance from them.

Inarticulate prayers, no more definite than a cry, often swept out from her into the vast silence, unbroken except by her husband's breathing or the plash of the wave or the creaking of the masts; but if ever she thought of definite help, it took the form of Deronda's presence and words, of the sympathy he might have for her, of the direction he might give her. It was sometimes after a white-lipped, fierce-eyed temptation with murdering fingers had made its demon-visit that these best moments of inward crying and clinging for rescue would come to her, and she would lie with wide-open eyes in which the rising tears seemed a blessing, and the thought, "I will not mind if I can keep from getting wicked," seemed an answer to the indefinite prayer.

So the days passed, taking them with light breezes beyond and about the Balearic Isles, and then to Sardinia, and then with gentle change persuading them northward again towards Corsica. But this floating, gently-wafted existence, with its apparently peaceful influences, was becoming as bad as a nightmare to Gwendolen.

"How long are we to be yachting?" she ventured to ask one day after they had been touching at Ajaccio, and the mere fact of change in going ashore had given her a relief from some of the thoughts which seemed now to cling about the very rigging

of the vessel, mix with the air in the red silk cabin below, and make the smell of the sea odious.

"What else should we do?" said Grandcourt. "I'm not tired of it. I don't see why we shouldn't stay out any length of time. There's less to bore one in this way. And where would you go to? I'm sick of foreign places. And we shall have enough of Ryelands. Would you rather be at Ryelands?"

"Oh no," said Gwendolen, indifferently, finding all places alike undesirable as soon as she imagined herself and her husband in them. "I only wondered how long you would like this."

"I like yachting longer than I like anything else," said Grandcourt; "and I had none last year. I suppose you are beginning to tire of it. Women are so confoundedly whimsical. They expect everything to give way to them."

"Oh dear, no!" said Gwendolen, letting out her scorn in a flute-like tone. "I never expect you to give way."

"Why should I?" said Grandcourt, with his inward voice, looking at her, and then choosing an orange—for they were at table.

She made up her mind to a length of yachting that she could not see beyond; but the next day, after a squall which had made her rather ill for the first time, he came down to her and said—

"There's been the devil's own work in the night. The skipper says we shall have to stay at Genoa for a week while things are set right."

"Do you mind that?" said Gwendolen, who lay looking very white amidst her white drapery.

"I should think so. Who wants to be broiling at Genoa?"

"It will be a change," said Gwendolen, made a little incautious by her languor.

"*I* don't want any change. Besides, the place is intolerable; and one can't move along the roads. I shall go out in a boat, as I used to do, and manage it myself. One can get rid of a few hours every day in that way, instead of stiving in a damnable hotel."

Here was a prospect which held hope in it. Gwendolen thought of hours when she would be alone, since Grandcourt would not want to take her in the said boat, and in her exultation at this unlooked-for relief, she had wild, contradictory fancies of what she might do with her freedom — that "running away" which she had already innumerable times seen to be a worse evil than any actual endurance, now finding new arguments as an escape from her worse self. Also, visionary relief on a par with the fancy of a prisoner that the night wind may blow down the wall of his prison and save him from desperate devices, insinuated itself as a better alternative, lawful to wish for.

The fresh current of expectation revived her energies, and enabled her to take all things with an air of cheerfulness and alacrity that made a change marked enough to be noticed by her husband. She watched through the evening lights to the sinking of the moon with less of awed loneliness than was habitual to her—nay, with a vague impression that in this mighty frame of things there might be some

preparation of rescue for her. Why not?—since the weather had just been on her side. This possibility of hoping, after her long fluctuation amid fears, was like a first return of hunger to the long-languishing patient.

She was waked the next morning by the casting of the anchor in the port of Genoa—waked from a strangely-mixed dream in which she felt herself escaping over the Mont Cenis, and wondering to find it warmer even in the moonlight on the snow, till suddenly she met Deronda, who told her to go back.

In an hour or so from that dream she actually met Deronda. But it was on the palatial staircase of the *Italia*, where she was feeling warm in her light woollen dress and straw hat; and her husband was by her side.

There was a start of surprise in Deronda before he could raise his hat and pass on. The moment did not seem to favour any closer greeting, and the circumstances under which they had last parted made him doubtful whether Grandcourt would be civilly inclined to him.

The doubt might certainly have been changed into a disagreeable certainty, for Grandcourt on this unaccountable appearance of Deronda at Genoa of all places, immediately tried to conceive how there could have been an arrangement between him and Gwendolen. It is true that before they were well in their rooms, he had seen how difficult it was to shape such an arrangement with any probability, being too cool-headed to find it at once easily

credible that Gwendolen had not only while in London hastened to inform Deronda of the yachting project, but had posted a letter to him from Marseilles or Barcelona, advising him to travel to Genoa in time for the chance of meeting her there, or of receiving a letter from her telling of some other destination—all which must have implied a miraculous foreknowledge in her, and in Deronda a bird-like facility in flying about and perching idly. Still he was there, and though Grandcourt would not make a fool of himself by fabrications that others might call preposterous, he was not, for all that, disposed to admit fully that Deronda's presence was so far as Gwendolen was concerned a mere accident. It was a disgusting fact; that was enough; and no doubt she was well pleased. A man out of temper does not wait for proofs before feeling towards all things animate and inanimate as if they were in a conspiracy against him, but at once thrashes his horse or kicks his dog in consequence. Grandcourt felt towards Gwendolen and Deronda as if he knew them to be in a conspiracy against him, and here was an event in league with them. What he took for clearly certain—and so far he divined the truth—was that Gwendolen was now counting on an interview with Deronda whenever her husband's back was turned.

As he sat taking his coffee at a convenient angle for observing her, he discerned something which he felt sure was the effect of a secret delight—some fresh ease in moving and speaking, some peculiar meaning in her eyes, whatever she looked on. Cer-

tainly her troubles had not marred her beauty. Mrs Grandcourt was handsomer than Gwendolen Harleth: her grace and expression were informed by a greater variety of inward experience, giving new play to her features, new attitudes in movement and repose; her whole person and air had the nameless something which often makes a woman more interesting after marriage than before, less confident that all things are according to her opinion, and yet with less of deer-like shyness—more fully a human being.

This morning the benefits of the voyage seemed to be suddenly revealing themselves in a new elasticity of mien. As she rose from the table and put her two heavily-jewelled hands on each side of her neck, according to her wont, she had no art to conceal that sort of joyous expectation which makes the present more bearable than usual, just as when a man means to go out he finds it easier to be amiable to the family for a quarter of an hour beforehand. It is not impossible that a terrier whose pleasure was concerned would perceive those amiable signs and know their meaning—know why his master stood in a peculiar way, talked with alacrity, and even had a peculiar gleam in his eye, so that on the least movement towards the door, the terrier would scuttle to be in time. And, in dog fashion, Grandcourt discerned the signs of Gwendolen's expectation, interpreting them with the narrow correctness which leaves a world of unknown feeling behind.

"A—just ring, please, and tell Gibbs to order

some dinner for us at three," said Grandcourt, as he too rose, took out a cigar, and then stretched his hand towards the hat that lay near. "I'm going to send Angus to find me a little sailing-boat for us to go out in; one that I can manage, with you at the tiller. It's uncommonly pleasant these fine evenings—the least boring of anything we can do."

Gwendolen turned cold: there was not only the cruel disappointment — there was the immediate conviction that her husband had determined to take her because he would not leave her out of his sight; and probably this dual solitude in a boat was the more attractive to him because it would be wearisome to her. They were not on the plank-island; she felt it the more possible to begin a contest. But the gleaming content had died out of her. There was a change in her like that of a glacier after sunset.

"I would rather not go in the boat," she said. "Take some one else with you."

"Very well; if you don't go, I shall not go," said Grandcourt. "We shall stay suffocating here, that's all."

"I can't bear going in a boat," said Gwendolen, angrily.

"That is a sudden change," said Grandcourt, with a slight sneer. "But since you decline, we shall stay indoors."

He laid down his hat again, lit his cigar, and walked up and down the room, pausing now and then to look out of the windows. Gwendolen's temper told her to persist. She knew very well

now that Grandcourt would not go without her; but if he must tyrannise over her, he should not do it precisely in the way he would choose. She would oblige him to stay in the hotel. Without speaking again she passed into the adjoining bedroom, and threw herself into a chair with her anger, seeing no purpose or issue—only feeling that the wave of evil had rushed back upon her, and dragged her away from her momentary breathing-place.

Presently Grandcourt came in with his hat on, but threw it off and sat down sideways on a chair nearly in front of her, saying, in his superficial drawl—

"Have you come round yet? or do you find it agreeable to be out of temper? You make things uncommonly pleasant for me."

"Why do you want to make them unpleasant for *me?*" said Gwendolen, getting helpless again, and feeling the hot tears rise.

"Now, will you be good enough to say what it is you have to complain of?" said Grandcourt, looking into her eyes, and using his most inward voice. "Is it that I stay indoors when you stay?"

She could give no answer. The sort of truth that made any excuse for her anger could not be uttered. In the conflict of despair and humiliation she began to sob, and the tears rolled down her cheeks—a form of agitation which she had never shown before in her husband's presence.

"I hope this is useful," said Grandcourt, after a moment or two. "All I can say is, it's most confoundedly unpleasant. What the devil women can

see in this kind of thing, I don't know. *You* see something to be got by it, of course. All I can see is, that we shall be shut up here when we might have been having a pleasant sail."

"Let us go, then," said Gwendolen, impetuously. "Perhaps we shall be drowned." She began to sob again.

This extraordinary behaviour, which had evidently some relation to Deronda, gave more definiteness to Grandcourt's conclusions. He drew his chair quite close in front of her, and said, in a low tone, "Just be quiet and listen, will you?"

There seemed to be a magical effect in this close vicinity. Gwendolen shrank and ceased to sob. She kept her eyelids down, and clasped her hands tightly.

"Let us understand each other," said Grandcourt, in the same tone. "I know very well what this nonsense means. But if you suppose I am going to let you make a fool of me, just dismiss that notion from your mind. What are you looking forward to, if you can't behave properly as my wife? There is disgrace for you, if you like to have it, but I don't know anything else; and as to Deronda, it's quite clear that he hangs back from you."

"It is all false!" said Gwendolen, bitterly. "You don't in the least imagine what is in my mind. I have seen enough of the disgrace that comes in that way. And you had better leave me at liberty to speak with any one I like. It would be better for you."

"You will allow me to judge of that," said Grand-

court, rising and moving to a little distance towards the window, but standing there playing with his whiskers as if he were awaiting something.

Gwendolen's words had so clear and tremendous a meaning for herself, that she thought they must have expressed it to Grandcourt, and had no sooner uttered them than she dreaded their effect. But his soul was garrisoned against presentiments and fears: he had the courage and confidence that belong to domination, and he was at that moment feeling perfectly satisfied that he held his wife with bit and bridle. By the time they had been married a year she would cease to be restive. He continued standing with his air of indifference, till she felt her habitual stifling consciousness of having an immovable obstruction in her life, like the nightmare of beholding a single form that serves to arrest all passage though the wide country lies open.

"What decision have you come to?" he said, presently looking at her. "What orders shall I give?"

"Oh, let us go," said Gwendolen. The walls had begun to be an imprisonment, and while there was breath in this man he would have the mastery over her. His words had the power of thumb-screws and the cold touch of the rack. To resist was to act like a stupid animal unable to measure results.

So the boat was ordered. She even went down to the quay again with him to see it before mid-day. Grandcourt had recovered perfect quietude of temper, and had a scornful satisfaction in the attention given by the nautical groups to the *milord*, owner of the

handsome yacht which had just put in for repairs, and who being an Englishman was naturally so at home on the sea that he could manage a sail with the same ease that he could manage a horse. The sort of exultation he had discerned in Gwendolen this morning she now thought that she discerned in him; and it was true that he had set his mind on this boating, and carried out his purpose as something that people might not expect him to do, with the gratified impulse of a strong will which had nothing better to exert itself upon. He had remarkable physical courage, and was proud of it—or rather he had a great contempt for the coarser, bulkier men who generally had less. Moreover, he was ruling that Gwendolen should go with him.

And when they came down again at five o'clock, equipped for their boating, the scene was as good as a theatrical representation for all beholders. This handsome, fair-skinned English couple manifesting the usual eccentricity of their nation, both of them proud, pale, and calm, without a smile on their faces, moving like creatures who were fulfilling a supernatural destiny—it was a thing to go out and see, a thing to paint. The husband's chest, back, and arms, showed very well in his close-fitting dress, and the wife was declared to be like a statue.

Some suggestions were proffered concerning a possible change in the breeze, and the necessary care in putting about, but Grandcourt's manner made the speakers understand that they were too officious, and that he knew better than they.

Gwendolen, keeping her impassible air, as they

moved away from the strand, felt her imagination obstinately at work. She was not afraid of any outward dangers—she was afraid of her own wishes, which were taking shapes possible and impossible, like a cloud of demon-faces. She was afraid of her own hatred, which under the cold iron touch that had compelled her to-day had gathered a fierce intensity. As she sat guiding the tiller under her husband's eyes, doing just what he told her, the strife within her seemed like her own effort to escape from herself. She clung to the thought of Deronda: she persuaded herself that he would not go away while she was there—he knew that she needed help. The sense that he was there would save her from acting out the evil within. And yet quick, quick, came images, plans of evil that would come again and seize her in the night, like furies preparing the deed that they would straightway avenge.

They were taken out of the port and carried eastward by a gentle breeze. Some clouds tempered the sunlight, and the hour was always deepening towards the supreme beauty of evening. Sails larger and smaller changed their aspect like sensitive things, and made a cheerful companionship, alternately near and far. The grand city shone more vaguely, the mountains looked out above it, and there was stillness as in an island sanctuary. Yet suddenly Gwendolen let her hands fall, and said in a scarcely audible tone, "God help me!"

"What is the matter?" said Grandcourt, not distinguishing the words.

"Oh, nothing," said Gwendolen, rousing herself from her momentary forgetfulness and resuming the ropes.

"Don't you find this pleasant?" said Grandcourt.

"Very."

"You admit now we couldn't have done anything better?"

"No—I see nothing better. I think we shall go on always, like the Flying Dutchman," said Gwendolen, wildly.

Grandcourt gave her one of his narrow, examining glances, and then said, "If you like, we can go to Spezia in the morning, and let them take us up there."

"No; I shall like nothing better than this."

"Very well; we'll do the same to-morrow. But we must be turning in soon. I shall put about."

CHAPTER LV.

"Ritorna a tua scienza
Che vuol, quanto la cosa è più perfetta
Più senta il bene, e così la doglienza."
—DANTE.

WHEN Deronda met Gwendolen and Grandcourt on the staircase, his mind was seriously preoccupied. He had just been summoned to the second interview with his mother.

In two hours after his parting from her he knew that the Princess Halm-Eberstein had left the hotel, and so far as the purpose of his journey to Genoa was concerned he might himself have set off on his way to Mainz, to deliver the letter from Joseph Kalonymos, and get possession of the family chest. But mixed mental conditions, which did not resolve themselves into definite reasons, hindered him from departure. Long after the farewell he was kept passive by a weight of retrospective feeling. He lived again, with the new keenness of emotive memory, through the exciting scenes which seemed past only in the sense of preparation for their actual presence in his soul. He allowed himself in his solitude to sob, with perhaps more than a woman's acuteness of

compassion, over that woman's life so near to his, and yet so remote. He beheld the world changed for him by the certitude of ties that altered the poise of hopes and fears, and gave him a new sense of fellowship, as if under cover of the night he had joined the wrong band of wanderers, and found with the rise of morning that the tents of his kindred were grouped far off. He had a quivering imaginative sense of close relation to the grandfather who had been animated by strong impulses and beloved thoughts, which were now perhaps being roused from their slumber within himself. And through all this passionate meditation Mordecai and Mirah were always present, as beings who clasped hands with him in sympathetic silence.

Of such quick, responsive fibre was Deronda made, under that mantle of self-controlled reserve into which early experience had thrown so much of his young strength.

When the persistent ringing of a bell as a signal reminded him of the hour he thought of looking into *Bradshaw*, and making the brief necessary preparations for starting by the next train—thought of it, but made no movement in consequence. Wishes went to Mainz and what he was to get possession of there — to London and the beings there who made the strongest attachments of his life ; but there were other wishes that clung in these moments to Genoa, and they kept him where he was by that force which urges us to linger over an interview that carries a presentiment of final farewell or of over-shadowing sorrow. Deronda did not for-

mally say, "I will stay over to-night, because it is Friday, and I should like to go to the evening service at the synagogue where they must all have gone; and besides, I may see the Grandcourts again." But simply, instead of packing and ringing for his bill, he sat doing nothing at all, while his mind went to the synagogue and saw faces there probably little different from those of his grandfather's time, and heard the Spanish-Hebrew liturgy which had lasted through the seasons of wandering generations like a plant with wandering seed, that gives the far-off lands a kinship to the exile's home — while, also, his mind went towards Gwendolen, with anxious remembrance of what had been, and with a half-admitted impression that it would be hardness in him willingly to go away at once without making some effort, in spite of Grandcourt's probable dislike, to manifest the continuance of his sympathy with her since their abrupt parting.

In this state of mind he deferred departure, ate his dinner without sense of flavour, rose from it quickly to find the synagogue, and in passing the porter asked if Mr and Mrs Grandcourt were still in the hotel, and what was the number of their apartment. The porter gave him the number, but added that they were gone out boating. That information had somehow power enough over Deronda to divide his thoughts with the memories wakened among the sparse *talithim* and keen dark faces of worshippers whose way of taking awful prayers and invocations with the easy familiarity which might

be called Hebrew dyed Italian, made him reflect that his grandfather, according to the Princess's hints of his character, must have been almost as exceptional a Jew as Mordecai. But were not men of ardent zeal and far-reaching hope everywhere exceptional?—the men who had the visions which, as Mordecai said, were the creators and feeders of the world—moulding and feeding the more passive life which without them would dwindle and shrivel into the narrow tenacity of insects, unshaken by thoughts beyond the reaches of their antennæ. Something of a mournful impatience perhaps added itself to the solicitude about Gwendolen (a solicitude that had room to grow in his present release from immediate cares) as an incitement to hasten from the synagogue and choose to take his evening walk towards the quay, always a favourite haunt with him, and just now attractive with the possibility that he might be in time to see the Grandcourts come in from their boating. In this case, he resolved that he would advance to greet them deliberately, and ignore any grounds that the husband might have for wishing him elsewhere.

The sun had set behind a bank of cloud, and only a faint yellow light was giving its farewell kisses to the waves, which were agitated by an active breeze. Deronda, sauntering slowly within sight of what took place on the strand, observed the groups there concentrating their attention on a sailing boat which was advancing swiftly landward, being rowed by two men. Amidst the clamorous talk in various languages, Deronda held it the surer means of get-

ting information not to ask questions, but to elbow his way to the foreground and be an unobstructed witness of what was occurring. Telescopes were being used, and loud statements made that the boat held somebody who had been drowned. One said it was the *milord* who had gone out in a sailing boat; another maintained that the prostrate figure he discerned was *miladi;* a Frenchman who had no glass would rather say that it was *milord* who had probably taken his wife out to drown her, according to the national practice—a remark which an English skipper immediately commented on in our native idiom (as nonsense which—had undergone a mining operation), and further dismissed by the decision that the reclining figure was a woman. For Deronda, terribly excited by fluctuating fears, the strokes of the oars as he watched them were divided by swift visions of events, possible and impossible, which might have brought about this issue, or this broken-off fragment of an issue, with a worse half undisclosed—if this woman apparently snatched from the waters were really Mrs Grandcourt.

But soon there was no longer any doubt: the boat was being pulled to land, and he saw Gwendolen half raising herself on her hands, by her own effort, under her heavy covering of tarpaulin and pea-jackets—pale as one of the sheeted dead, shivering, with wet hair streaming, a wild amazed consciousness in her eyes, as if she had waked up in a world where some judgment was impending, and the beings she saw around were coming to seize

her. The first rower who jumped to land was also wet through, and ran off; the sailors, close about the boat, hindered Deronda from advancing, and he could only look on while Gwendolen gave scared glances, and seemed to shrink with terror as she was carefully, tenderly helped out, and led on by the strong arms of those rough, bronzed men, her wet clothes clinging about her limbs, and adding to the impediment of her weakness. Suddenly her wandering eyes fell on Deronda, standing before her, and immediately, as if she had been expecting him and looking for him, she tried to stretch out her arms, which were held back by her supporters, saying, in a muffled voice—

"It is come, it is come! He is dead!"

"Hush, hush!" said Deronda, in a tone of authority; "quiet yourself." Then to the men who were assisting her, "I am a connection of this lady's husband. If you will get her on to the *Italia* as quickly as possible, I will undertake everything else."

He stayed behind to hear from the remaining boatman that her husband had gone down irrecoverably, and that his boat was left floating empty. He and his comrade had heard a cry, had come up in time to see the lady jump in after her husband, and had got her out fast enough to save her from much damage.

After this, Deronda hastened to the hotel, to assure himself that the best medical help would be provided; and being satisfied on this point, he telegraphed the event to Sir Hugo, begging him to come

forthwith, and also to Mr Gascoigne, whose address at the Rectory made his nearest known way of getting the information to Gwendolen's mother. Certain words of Gwendolen's in the past had come back to him with the effectiveness of an inspiration: in moments of agitated confession she had spoken of her mother's presence as a possible help, if she could have had it.

CHAPTER LVI.

"'The pang, the curse with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor lift them up to pray."

—COLERIDGE.

DERONDA did not take off his clothes that night. Gwendolen, after insisting on seeing him again before she would consent to be undrest, had been perfectly quiet, and had only asked him, with a whispering, repressed eagerness, to promise that he would come to her when she sent for him in the morning. Still, the possibility that a change might come over her, the danger of a supervening feverish condition, and the suspicion that something in the late catastrophe was having an effect which might betray itself in excited words, acted as a foreboding within him. He mentioned to her attendant that he should keep himself ready to be called if there were any alarming change of symptoms, making it understood by all concerned that he was in communication with her friends in England, and felt bound meanwhile to take all care on her behalf—a position which it was the easier for him to assume,

because he was well known to Grandcourt's valet, the only old servant who had come on the late voyage.

But when fatigue from the strangely various emotion of the day at last sent Deronda to sleep, he remained undisturbed except by the morning dreams which came as a tangled web of yesterday's events, and finally waked him with an image drawn by his pressing anxiety.

Still, it was morning, and there had been no summons—an augury which cheered him while he made his toilet, and reflected that it was too early to send inquiries. Later, he learned that she had passed a too wakeful night, but had shown no violent signs of agitation, and was at last sleeping. He wondered at the force that dwelt in this creature, so alive to dread; for he had an irresistible impression that even under the effects of a severe physical shock she was mastering herself with a determination of concealment. For his own part, he thought that his sensibilities had been blunted by what he had been going through in the meeting with his mother: he seemed to himself now to be only fulfilling claims, and his more passionate sympathy was in abeyance. He had lately been living so keenly in an experience quite apart from Gwendolen's lot, that his present cares for her were like a revisiting of scenes familiar in the past, and there was not yet a complete revival of the inward response to them.

Meanwhile he employed himself in getting a formal, legally-recognised statement from the fishermen who had rescued Gwendolen. Few details came to light. The boat in which Grandcourt had gone out

had been found drifting with its sail loose, and had been towed in. The fishermen thought it likely that he had been knocked overboard by the flapping of the sail while putting about, and that he had not known how to swim; but, though they were near, their attention had been first arrested by a cry which seemed like that of a man in distress, and while they were hastening with their oars, they heard a shriek from the lady, and saw her jump in.

On re-entering the hotel, Deronda was told that Gwendolen had risen, and was desiring to see him. He was shown into a room darkened by blinds and curtains, where she was seated with a white shawl wrapped round her, looking towards the opening door like one waiting uneasily. But her long hair was gathered up and coiled carefully, and, through all, the blue stars in her ears had kept their place: as she started impulsively to her full height, sheathed in her white shawl, her face and neck not less white, except for a purple line under her eyes, her lips a little apart with the peculiar expression of one accused and helpless, she looked like the unhappy ghost of that Gwendolen Harleth whom Deronda had seen turning with firm lips and proud self-possession from her losses at the gaming-table. The sight pierced him with pity, and the effects of all their past relation began to revive within him.

"I beseech you to rest—not to stand," said Deronda, as he approached her; and she obeyed, falling back into her chair again.

"Will you sit down near me?" she said. "I want to speak very low."

She was in a large arm-chair, and he drew a small one near to her side. The action seemed to touch her peculiarly: turning her pale face full upon his, which was very near, she said, in the lowest audible tone, "You know I am a guilty woman?"

Deronda himself turned paler as he said, "I know nothing." He did not dare to say more.

"He is dead." She uttered this with the same undertoned decision.

"Yes," said Deronda, in a mournful suspense which made him reluctant to speak.

"His face will not be seen above the water again," said Gwendolen, in a tone that was not louder, but of a suppressed eagerness, while she held both her hands clenched.

"No."

"Not by any one else—only by me—a dead face —I shall never get away from it."

It was with an inward voice of desperate self-repression that she spoke these last words, while she looked away from Deronda towards something at a distance from her on the floor. Was she seeing the whole event—her own acts included—through an exaggerating medium of excitement and horror? Was she in a state of delirium into which there entered a sense of concealment and necessity for self-repression? Such thoughts glanced through Deronda as a sort of hope. But imagine the conflict of feeling that kept him silent. She was bent on confession, and he dreaded hearing her confession. Against his better will, he shrank from the task that was laid on him: he wished, and yet rebuked the

wish as cowardly, that she could bury her secrets in her own bosom. He was not a priest. He dreaded the weight of this woman's soul flung upon his own with imploring dependence. But she spoke again, hurriedly, looking at him—

"You will not say that I ought to tell the world? you will not say that I ought to be disgraced? I could not do it. I could not bear it. I cannot have my mother know. Not if I were dead. I could not have her know. I must tell you; but you will not say that any one else should know."

"I can say nothing in my ignorance," said Deronda, mournfully, "except that I desire to help you."

"I told you from the beginning—as soon as I could—I told you I was afraid of myself." There was a piteous pleading in the low murmur to which Deronda turned his ear only. Her face afflicted him too much. "I felt a hatred in me that was always working like an evil spirit — contriving things. Everything I could do to free myself came into my mind; and it got worse—all things got worse. That was why I asked you to come to me in town. I thought then I would tell you the worst about myself. I tried. But I could not tell everything. And *he* came in."

She paused, while a shudder passed through her; but soon went on.

"I will tell you everything now. Do you think a woman who cried, and prayed, and struggled to be saved from herself, could be a murderess?"

"Great God!" said Deronda, in a deep, shaken

voice, "don't torture me needlessly. You have not murdered him. You threw yourself into the water with the impulse to save him. Tell me the rest afterwards. This death was an accident that you could not have hindered."

"Don't be impatient with me." The tremor, the childlike beseeching in these words compelled Deronda to turn his head and look at her face. The poor quivering lips went on. "You said—you used to say—you felt more for those who had done something wicked and were miserable; you said they might get better—they might be scourged into something better. If you had not spoken in that way, everything would have been worse. I *did* remember all you said to me. It came to me always. It came to me at the very last—that was the reason why I—— But now, if you cannot bear with me when I tell you everything—if you turn away from me and forsake me, what shall I do? Am I worse than I was when you found me and wanted to make me better? All the wrong I have done was in me then —and more—and more——if you had not come and been patient with me. And now—will you forsake me?"

Her hands which had been so tightly clenched some minutes before, were now helplessly relaxed and trembling on the arm of her chair. Her quivering lips remained parted as she ceased speaking. Deronda could not answer; he was obliged to look away. He took one of her hands, and clasped it as if they were going to walk together like two children: it was the only way in which he could

answer, "I will not forsake you." And all the while he felt as if he were putting his name to a blank paper which might be filled up terribly. Their attitude, his averted face with its expression of a suffering which he was solemnly resolved to undergo, might have told half the truth of the situation to a beholder who had suddenly entered.

That grasp was an entirely new experience to Gwendolen: she had never before had from any man a sign of tenderness which her own being had needed, and she interpreted its powerful effect on her into a promise of inexhaustible patience and constancy. The stream of renewed strength made it possible for her to go on as she had begun—with that fitful, wandering confession where the sameness of experience seems to nullify the sense of time or of order in events. She began again in a fragmentary way—

"All sorts of contrivances in my mind—but all so difficult. And I fought against them—I was terrified at them—I saw his dead face"—here her voice sank almost to a whisper close to Deronda's ear—"ever so long ago I saw it; and I wished him to be dead. And yet it terrified me. I was like two creatures. I could not speak—I wanted to kill—it was as strong as thirst—and then directly—I felt beforehand I had done something dreadful, unalterable—that would make me like an evil spirit. And it came—it came."

She was silent a moment or two, as if her memory had lost itself in a web where each mesh drew all the rest.

"It had all been in my mind when I first spoke to you—when we were at the Abbey. I had done something then. I could not tell you that. It was the only thing I did towards carrying out my thoughts. They went about over everything; but they all remained like dreadful dreams—all but one. I did one act—and I never undid it—it is there still—as long ago as when we were at Ryelands. There it was—something my fingers longed for among the beautiful toys in the cabinet in my boudoir—small and sharp, like a long willow leaf in a silver sheath. I locked it in the drawer of my dressing-case. I was continually haunted with it, and how I should use it. I fancied myself putting it under my pillow. But I never did. I never looked at it again. I dared not unlock the drawer: it had a key all to itself; and not long ago, when we were in the yacht, I dropped the key into the deep water. It was my wish to drop it and deliver myself. After that I began to think how I could open the drawer without the key: and when I found we were to stay at Genoa, it came into my mind that I could get it opened privately at the hotel. But then, when we were going up the stairs, I met you; and I thought I should talk to you alone and tell you this—everything I could not tell you in town; and then I was forced to go out in the boat."

A sob had for the first time risen with the last words, and she sank back in her chair. The memory of that acute disappointment seemed for the moment to efface what had come since. Deronda did not look at her, but he said, insistently—

"And it has all remained in your imagination. It has gone on only in your thought. To the last the evil temptation has been resisted?"

There was silence. The tears had rolled down her cheeks. She pressed her handkerchief against them and sat upright. She was summoning her resolution; and again, leaning a little towards Deronda's ear, she began in a whisper—

"No, no; I will tell you everything as God knows it. I will tell you no falsehood; I will tell you the exact truth. What should I do else? I used to think I could never be wicked. I thought of wicked people as if they were a long way off me. Since then I have been wicked. I have felt wicked. And everything has been a punishment to me—all the things I used to wish for—it is as if they had been made red-hot. The very daylight has often been a punishment to me. Because —you know—I ought not to have married. That was the beginning of it. I wronged some one else. I broke my promise. I meant to get pleasure for myself, and it all turned to misery. I wanted to make my gain out of another's loss—you remember?—it was like roulette—and the money burnt into me. And I could not complain. It was as if I had prayed that another should lose and I should win. And I had won. I knew it all—I knew I was guilty. When we were on the sea, and I lay awake at night in the cabin, I sometimes felt that everything I had done lay open without excuse—nothing was hidden—how could anything be known to me only?—it was not my

own knowledge, it was God's that had entered into me, and even the stillness — everything held a punishment for me—everything but you. I always thought that you would not want me to be punished —you would have tried and helped me to be better. And only thinking of that helped me. You will not change—you will not want to punish me now?"

Again a sob had risen.

"God forbid!" groaned Deronda. But he sat motionless.

This long wandering with the poor conscience-stricken one over her past was difficult to bear, but he dared not again urge her with a question. He must let her mind follow its own need. She unconsciously left intervals in her retrospect, not clearly distinguishing between what she said and what she had only an inward vision of. Her next words came after such an interval.

"That all made it so hard when I was forced to go in the boat. Because when I saw you it was an unexpected joy, and I thought I could tell you everything—about the locked-up drawer and what I had not told you before. And if I had told you, and knew it was in your mind, it would have less power over me. I hoped and trusted in that. For after all my struggles and my crying, the hatred and rage, the temptation that frightened me, the longing, the thirst for what I dreaded, always came back. And that disappointment — when I was quite shut out from speaking to you, and I was driven to go in the boat—brought all the evil back, as if I had been locked in a prison with it and no

escape. Oh, it seems so long ago now since I stepped into that boat! I could have given up everything in that moment, to have the forked lightning for a weapon to strike him dead."

Some of the compressed fierceness that she was recalling seemed to find its way into her undertoned utterance. After a little silence she said, with agitated hurry—

"If he were here again, what should I do? I cannot wish him here — and yet I cannot bear his dead face. I was a coward. I ought to have borne contempt. I ought to have gone away — gone and wandered like a beggar rather than stay to feel like a fiend. But turn where I would there was something I could not bear. Sometimes I thought he would kill *me* if I resisted his will. But now — his dead face is there, and I cannot bear it."

Suddenly loosing Deronda's hand, she started up, stretching her arms to their full length upward, and said with a sort of moan—

"I have been a cruel woman! What can *I* do but cry for help? *I* am sinking. Die—die—you are forsaken — go down, go down into darkness. Forsaken—no pity—*I* shall be forsaken."

She sank in her chair again and broke into sobs. Even Deronda had no place in her consciousness at that moment. He was completely unmanned. Instead of finding, as he had imagined, that his late experience had dulled his susceptibility to fresh emotion, it seemed that the lot of this young creature, whose swift travel from her bright rash-

girlhood into this agony of remorse he had had to behold in helplessness, pierced him the deeper because it came close upon another sad revelation of spiritual conflict: he was in one of those moments when the very anguish of passionate pity makes us ready to choose that we will know pleasure no more, and live only for the stricken and afflicted. He had risen from his seat while he watched that terrible outburst—which seemed the more awful to him because, even in this supreme agitation, she kept the suppressed voice of one who confesses in secret. At last he felt impelled to turn his back towards her and walk to a distance.

But presently there was stillness. Her mind had opened to the sense that he had gone away from her. When Deronda turned round to approach her again, he saw her face bent towards him, her eyes dilated, her lips parted. She was an image of timid forlorn beseeching—too timid to entreat in words while he kept himself aloof from her. Was she forsaken by him—now—already? But his eyes met hers sorrowfully—met hers for the first time fully since she had said, "You know I am a guilty woman;" and that full glance in its intense mournfulness seemed to say, "I know it, but I shall all the less forsake you." He sat down by her side again in the same attitude—without turning his face towards her and without again taking her hand.

Once more Gwendolen was pierced, as she had been by his face of sorrow at the Abbey, with a compunction less egoistic than that which urged

her to confess, and she said, in a tone of loving regret—

"I make you very unhappy."

Deronda gave an indistinct "Oh," just shrinking together and changing his attitude a little. Then he had gathered resolution enough to say clearly, "There is no question of being happy or unhappy. What I most desire at this moment is what will most help you. Tell me all you feel it a relief to tell."

Devoted as these words were, they widened his spiritual distance from her, and she felt it more difficult to speak: she had a vague need of getting nearer to that compassion which seemed to be regarding her from a halo of superiority, and the need turned into an impulse to humble herself more. She was ready to throw herself on her knees before him; but no—her wonderfully mixed consciousness held checks on that impulse, and she was kept silent and motionless by the pressure of opposing needs. Her stillness made Deronda at last say—

"Perhaps you are too weary. Shall I go away, and come again whenever you wish it?"

"No, no," said Gwendolen—the dread of his leaving her bringing back her power of speech. She went on with her low-toned eagerness, "I want to tell you what it was that came over me in that boat. I was full of rage at being obliged to go—full of rage—and I could do nothing but sit there like a galley-slave. And then we got away—out of the port—into the deep—and everything was

still—and we never looked at each other, only he spoke to order me—and the very light about me seemed to hold me a prisoner and force me to sit as I did. It came over me that when I was a child I used to fancy sailing away into a world where people were not forced to live with any one they did not like—I did not like my father-in-law to come home. And now, I thought, just the opposite had come to me. I had stept into a boat, and my life was a sailing and sailing away—gliding on and no help—always into solitude with *him*, away from deliverance. And because I felt more helpless than ever, my thoughts went out over worse things—I longed for worse things—I had cruel wishes—I fancied impossible ways of—— I did not want to die myself; I was afraid of our being drowned together. If it had been any use I should have prayed—I should have prayed that something might befall him. I should have prayed that he might sink out of my sight and leave me alone. I knew no way of killing him there, but I did, I did kill him in my thoughts."

She sank into silence for a minute, submerged by the weight of memory which no words could represent.

"But yet all the while I felt that I was getting more wicked. And what had been with me so much, came to me just then—what you once said—about dreading to increase my wrong-doing and my remorse—I should hope for nothing then. It was all like a writing of fire within me. Getting wicked was misery—being shut out for ever from

knowing what you—what better lives were. That had always been coming back to me in the midst of bad thoughts—it came back to me then—but yet with a despair—a feeling that it was no use—evil wishes were too strong. I remember then letting go the tiller and saying 'God help me!' But then I was forced to take it again and go on; and the evil longings, the evil prayers came again and blotted everything else dim, till, in the midst of them—I don't know how it was—he was turning the sail—there was a gust—he was struck—I know nothing—I only know that I saw my wish outside me."

She began to speak more hurriedly, and in more of a whisper.

"I saw him sink, and my heart gave a leap as if it were going out of me. I think I did not move. I kept my hands tight. It was long enough for me to be glad, and yet to think it was no use—he would come up again. And he *was* come—farther off—the boat had moved. It was all like lightning. 'The rope!' he called out in a voice—not his own—I hear it now—and I stooped for the rope—I felt I must—I felt sure he could swim, and he would come back whether or not, and I dreaded him. That was in my mind—he would come back. But he was gone down again, and I had the rope in my hand—no, there he was again—his face above the water—and he cried again—and I held my hand, and my heart said, 'Die!'—and he sank; and I felt 'It is done—I am wicked, I am lost!'—and I had the rope in my hand—I don't know what I thought—I was leaping away from myself—I

would have saved him then. I was leaping from my crime, and there it was—close to me as I fell—there was the dead face—dead, dead. It can never be altered. That was what happened. That was what I did. You know it all. It can never be altered."

She sank back in her chair, exhausted with the agitation of memory and speech. Deronda felt the burden on his spirit less heavy than the foregoing dread. The word "guilty" had held a possibility of interpretations worse than the fact; and Gwendolen's confession, for the very reason that her conscience made her dwell on the determining power of her evil thoughts, convinced him the more that there had been throughout a counterbalancing struggle of her better will. It seemed almost certain that her murderous thought had had no outward effect—that, quite apart from it, the death was inevitable. Still, a question as to the outward effectiveness of a criminal desire dominant enough to impel even a momentary act, cannot alter our judgment of the desire; and Deronda shrank from putting that question forward in the first instance. He held it likely that Gwendolen's remorse aggravated her inward guilt, and that she gave the character of decisive action to what had been an inappreciably instantaneous glance of desire. But her remorse was the precious sign of a recoverable nature; it was the culmination of that self-disapproval which had been the awakening of a new life within her; it marked her off from the criminals whose only regret is failure in securing their evil

wish. Deronda could not utter one word to diminish that sacred aversion to her worst self—that thorn-pressure which must come with the crowning of the sorrowful Better, suffering because of the Worse. All this mingled thought and feeling kept him silent; speech was too momentous to be ventured on rashly. There were no words of comfort that did not carry some sacrilege. If he had opened his lips to speak, he could only have echoed, "It can never be altered—it remains unaltered, to alter other things." But he was silent and motionless—he did not know how long—before he turned to look at her, and saw her sunk back with closed eyes, like a lost, weary, storm-beaten white doe, unable to rise and pursue its unguided way. He rose and stood before her. The movement touched her consciousness, and she opened her eyes with a slight quivering that seemed like fear.

"You must rest now. Try to rest: try to sleep. And may I see you again this evening—to-morrow—when you have had some rest? Let us say no more now."

The tears came, and she could not answer except by a slight movement of the head. Deronda rang for attendance, spoke urgently of the necessity that she should be got to rest, and then left her.

CHAPTER LVII.

"The unripe grape, the ripe, and the dried. All things are changes, not into nothing, but into that which is not at present."—MARCUS AURELIUS.

Deeds are the pulse of Time, his beating life,
And righteous or unrighteous, being done,
Must throb in after-throbs till Time itself
Be laid in stillness, and the universe
Quiver and breathe upon no mirror more.

IN the evening she sent for him again. It was already near the hour at which she had been brought in from the sea the evening before, and the light was subdued enough with blinds drawn up and windows open. She was seated gazing fixedly on the sea, resting her cheek on her hand, looking less shattered than when he had left her, but with a deep melancholy in her expression which as Deronda approached her passed into an anxious timidity. She did not put out her hand, but said, "How long ago it is!" Then, "Will you sit near me again a little while?"

He placed himself by her side as he had done before, and seeing that she turned to him with that indefinable expression which implies a wish to say something, he waited for her to speak. But

again she looked towards the window silently, and again turned with the same expression, which yet did not issue in speech. There was some fear hindering her, and Deronda, wishing to relieve her timidity, averted his face. Presently he heard her cry imploringly—

"You will not say that any one else should know?"

"Most decidedly not," said Deronda. "There is no action that ought to be taken in consequence. There is no injury that could be righted in that way. There is no retribution that any mortal could apportion justly."

She was so still during a pause, that she seemed to be holding her breath before she said—

"But if I had not had that murderous will—that moment—if I had thrown the rope on the instant—perhaps it would have hindered death?"

"No—I think not," said Deronda, slowly. "If it were true that he could swim, he must have been seized with cramp. With your quickest, utmost effort, it seems impossible that you could have done anything to save him. That momentary murderous will cannot, I think, have altered the course of events. Its effect is confined to the motives in your own breast. Within ourselves our evil will is momentous, and sooner or later it works its way outside us—it may be in the vitiation that breeds evil acts, but also it may be in the self-abhorrence that stings us into better striving."

"I am saved from robbing others — there are others—they will have everything—they will have what they ought to have. I knew that some time

before I left town. You do not suspect me of wrong desires about those things?" She spoke hesitatingly.

"I had not thought of them," said Deronda; "I was thinking too much of the other things."

"Perhaps you don't quite know the beginning of it all," said Gwendolen, slowly, as if she were overcoming her reluctance. "There was some one else he ought to have married. And I knew it, and I told her I would not hinder it. And I went away—that was when you first saw me. But then we became poor all at once, and I was very miserable, and I was tempted. I thought, 'I shall do as I like and make everything right.' I persuaded myself. And it was all different. It was all dreadful. Then came hatred and wicked thoughts. That was how it all came. I told you I was afraid of myself. And I did what you told me—I did try to make my fear a safeguard. I thought of what would be if I—— I felt what would come—how I should dread the morning—wishing it would be always night—and yet in the darkness always seeing something—seeing death. If you did not know how miserable I was, you might——but now it has all been no use. I can care for nothing but saving the rest from knowing—poor mamma, who has never been happy."

There was silence again before she said with a repressed sob—"You cannot bear to look at me any more. You think I am too wicked. You do not believe that I can become any better—worth anything—worthy enough—I shall always be too wicked to——" The voice broke off helpless.

Deronda's heart was pierced. He turned his eyes on her poor beseeching face and said, "I believe that you may become worthier than you have ever yet been—worthy to lead a life that may be a blessing. No evil dooms us hopelessly except the evil we love, and desire to continue in, and make no effort to escape from. You *have* made efforts—you will go on making them."

"But you were the beginning of them. You must not forsake me," said Gwendolen, leaning with her clasped hands on the arm of her chair and looking at him, while her face bore piteous traces of the life-experience concentrated in the twenty-four hours—that new terrible life lying on the other side of the deed which fulfils a criminal desire. "I will bear any penance. I will lead any life you tell me. But you must not forsake me. You must be near. If you had been near me—if I could have said everything to you, I should have been different. You will not forsake me?"

"It could never be my impulse to forsake you," said Deronda promptly, with that voice which, like his eyes, had the unintentional effect of making his ready sympathy seem more personal and special than it really was. And in that moment he was not himself quite free from a foreboding of some such self-committing effect. His strong feeling for this stricken creature could not hinder rushing images of future difficulty. He continued to meet her appealing eyes as he spoke, but it was with the painful consciousness that to her ear his words might carry a promise which one day would seem unfulfilled: he was

making an indefinite promise to an indefinite hope. Anxieties, both immediate and distant, crowded on his thought, and it was under their influence that, after a moment's silence, he said—

"I expect Sir Hugo Mallinger to arrive by to-morrow night at least; and I am not without hope that Mrs Davilow may shortly follow him. Her presence will be the greatest comfort to you—it will give you a motive, to save her from unnecessary pain?"

"Yes, yes—I will try. And you will not go away?"

"Not till after Sir Hugo has come."

"But we shall all go to England?"

"As soon as possible," said Deronda, not wishing to enter into particulars.

Gwendolen looked towards the window again with an expression which seemed like a gradual awakening to new thoughts. The twilight was perceptibly deepening, but Deronda could see a movement in her eyes and hands such as accompanies a return of perception in one who has been stunned.

"You will always be with Sir Hugo now?" she said presently, looking at him. "You will always live at the Abbey—or else at Diplow?"

"I am quite uncertain where I shall live," said Deronda, colouring.

She was warned by his changed colour that she had spoken too rashly, and fell silent. After a little while she began, again looking away—

"It is impossible to think how my life will go on. I think now it would be better for me to be poor and obliged to work."

"New promptings will come as the days pass.

When you are among your friends again, you will discern new duties," said Deronda. "Make it a task now to get as well and calm—as much like yourself as you can, before——" He hesitated.

"Before my mother comes," said Gwendolen. "Ah! I must be changed. I have not looked at myself. Should you have known me," she added, turning towards him, "if you had met me now?—should you have known me for the one you saw at Leubronn?"

"Yes, I should have known you," said Deronda, mournfully. "The outside change is not great. I should have seen at once that it was you, and that you had gone through some great sorrow."

"Don't wish now that you had never seen me—don't wish that," said Gwendolen, imploringly, while the tears gathered.

"I should despise myself for wishing it," said Deronda. "How could I know what I was wishing? We must find our duties in what comes to us, not in what we imagine might have been. If I took to foolish wishing of that sort, I should wish—not that I had never seen you, but that I had been able to save you from this."

"You have saved me from worse," said Gwendolen, in a sobbing voice. "I should have been worse if it had not been for you. If you had not been good, I should have been more wicked than I am."

"It will be better for me to go now," said Deronda, worn in spirit by the perpetual strain of this scene. "Remember what we said of your task—to get well and calm before other friends come."

He rose as he spoke, and she gave him her hand submissively. But when he had left her she sank on her knees, in hysterical crying. The distance between them was too great. She was a banished soul —beholding a possible life which she had sinned herself away from.

She was found in this way, crushed on the floor. Such grief seemed natural in a poor lady whose husband had been drowned in her presence.

BOOK VIII.

FRUIT AND SEED

CHAPTER LVIII.

"Much adoe there was, God wot;
He wold love and she wold not."
—NICHOLAS BRETON.'

EXTENSION, we know, is a very imperfect measure of things; and the length of the sun's journeying can no more tell us how far life has advanced than the acreage of a field can tell us what growths may be active within it. A man may go south, and, stumbling over a bone, may meditate upon it till he has found a new starting-point for anatomy; or eastward, and discover a new key to language telling a new story of races; or he may head an expedition that opens new continental pathways, get himself maimed in body, and go through a whole heroic poem of resolve and endurance; and at the end of a few months he may come back to find his neighbours grumbling at the same parish grievance as before, or to see the same elderly gentleman treading the pavement in discourse with himself, shaking his head after the same percussive butcher's boy, and pausing at the same shop-window to look at the same prints. If the swiftest thinking has about the

pace of a greyhound, the slowest must be supposed to move, like the limpet, by an apparent sticking, which after a good while is discerned to be a slight progression. Such differences are manifest in the variable intensity which we call human experience, from the revolutionary rush of change which makes a new inner and outer life, to that quiet recurrence of the familiar, which has no other epochs than those of hunger and the heavens.

Something of this contrast was seen in the year's experience which had turned the brilliant, self-confident Gwendolen Harleth of the Archery Meeting into the crushed penitent impelled to confess her unworthiness where it would have been her happiness to be held worthy; while it had left her family in Pennicote without deeper change than that of some outward habits, and some adjustment of prospects and intentions to reduced income, fewer visits, and fainter compliments. The Rectory was as pleasant a home as before: the red and pink peonies on the lawn, the rows of hollyhocks by the hedges, had bloomed as well this year as last: the Rector maintained his cheerful confidence in the goodwill of patrons and his resolution to deserve it by diligence in the fulfilment of his duties, whether patrons were likely to hear of it or not; doing nothing solely with an eye to promotion except, perhaps, the writing of two ecclesiastical articles, which, having no signature, were attributed to some one else, except by the patrons who had a special copy sent them, and these certainly knew the author but did not read the articles. The Rector, however, chewed no poisonous

cud of suspicion on this point: he made marginal notes on his own copies to render them a more interesting loan, and was gratified that the Archdeacon and other authorities had nothing to say against the general tenor of his argument. Peaceful authorship!—living in the air of the fields and downs, and not in the thrice-breathed breath of criticism—bringing no Dantesque leanness; rather, assisting nutrition by complacency, and perhaps giving a more suffusive sense of achievement than the production of a whole *Divina Commedia*. Then there was the father's recovered delight in his favourite son, which was a happiness outweighing the loss of eighteen hundred a-year. Of whatever nature might be the hidden change wrought in Rex by the disappointment of his first love, it was apparently quite secondary to that evidence of more serious ambition which dated from the family misfortune; indeed, Mr Gascoigne was inclined to regard the little affair which had caused him so much anxiety the year before as an evaporation of superfluous moisture, a kind of finish to the baking process which the human dough demands. Rex had lately come down for a summer visit to the Rectory, bringing Anna home, and while he showed nearly the old liveliness with his brothers and sisters, he continued in his holiday the habits of the eager student, rising early in the morning and shutting himself up early in the evenings to carry on a fixed course of study.

"You don't repent the choice of the law as a profession, Rex?" said his father.

"There is no profession I would choose before it,"

said Rex. "I should like to end my life as a first-rate judge, and help to draw up a code. I reverse the famous dictum—I should say, 'Give me something to do with making the laws, and let who will make the songs.'"

"You will have to stow in an immense amount of rubbish, I suppose—that's the worst of it," said the Rector.

"I don't see that law-rubbish is worse than any other sort. It is not so bad as the rubbishy literature that people choke their minds with. It doesn't make one so dull. Our wittiest men have often been lawyers. Any orderly way of looking at things as cases and evidence seems to me better than a perpetual wash of odds and ends bearing on nothing in particular. And then, from a higher point of view, the foundations and the growth of law make the most interesting aspects of philosophy and history. Of course there will be a good deal that is troublesome, drudging, perhaps exasperating. But the great prizes in life can't be won easily—I see that."

"Well, my boy, the best augury of a man's success in his profession is that he thinks it the finest in the world. But I fancy it is so with most work when a man goes into it with a will. Brewitt, the blacksmith, said to me the other day that his 'prentice had no mind to his trade; 'and yet, sir,' said Brewitt, 'what would a young fellow have if he doesn't like the blacksmithing?'"

The Rector cherished a fatherly delight, which he allowed to escape him only in moderation. Warham,

who had gone to India, he had easily borne parting with, but Rex was that romance of later life which a man sometimes finds in a son whom he recognises as superior to himself, picturing a future eminence for him according to a variety of famous examples. It was only to his wife that he said with decision, "Rex will be a distinguished man, Nancy, I am sure of it—as sure as Paley's father was about his son."

"Was Paley an old bachelor?" said Mrs Gascoigne.

"That is hardly to the point, my dear," said the Rector, who did not remember that irrelevant detail. And Mrs Gascoigne felt that she had spoken rather weakly.

This quiet trotting of time at the Rectory was shared by the group who had exchanged the faded dignity of Offendene for the low white house not a mile off, well enclosed with evergreens, and known to the villagers as "Jodson's." Mrs Davilow's delicate face showed only a slight deepening of its mild melancholy, her hair only a few more silver lines, in consequence of the last year's trials; the four girls had bloomed out a little from being less in the shade; and the good Jocosa preserved her serviceable neutrality towards the pleasures and glories of the world as things made for those who were not "in a situation."

The low narrow drawing-room, enlarged by two quaint projecting windows, with lattices wide open on a July afternoon to the scent of monthly roses, the faint murmurs of the garden, and the occasional

rare sound of hoofs and wheels seeming to clarify the succeeding silence, made rather a crowded lively scene, Rex and Anna being added to the usual group of six. Anna, always a favourite with her younger cousins, had much to tell of her new experience, and the acquaintances she had made in London; and when on her first visit she came alone, many questions were asked her about Gwendolen's house in Grosvenor Square, what Gwendolen herself had said, and what any one else had said about Gwendolen. Had Anna been to see Gwendolen after she had known about the yacht? No:—an answer which left speculation free concerning everything connected with that interesting unknown vessel beyond the fact that Gwendolen had written just before she set out to say that Mr Grandcourt and she were going yachting in the Mediterranean, and again from Marseilles to say that she was sure to like the yachting, the cabins were very elegant, and she would probably not send another letter till she had written quite a long diary filled with *dittos*. Also, this movement of Mr and Mrs Grandcourt had been mentioned in "the newspaper;" so that altogether this new phase of Gwendolen's exalted life made a striking part of the sisters' romance, the book-devouring Isabel throwing in a corsair or two to make an adventure that might end well.

But when Rex was present, the girls, according to instructions, never started this fascinating topic; and to-day there had only been animated descriptions of the Meyricks and their extraordinary Jewish friends, which caused some astonished questioning

from minds to which the idea of live Jews, out of a book, suggested a difference deep enough to be almost zoological, as of a strange race in Pliny's Natural History that might sleep under the shade of its own ears. Bertha could not imagine what Jews believed now; and had a dim idea that they rejected the Old Testament since it proved the New; Miss Merry thought that Mirah and her brother could "never have been properly argued with," and the amiable Alice did not mind what the Jews believed, she was sure she "couldn't bear them." Mrs Davilow corrected her by saying that the great Jewish families who were in society were quite what they ought to be both in London and Paris, but admitted that the commoner unconverted Jews were objectionable; and Isabel asked whether Mirah talked just as they did, or whether you might be with her and not find out that she was a Jewess.

Rex, who had no partisanship with the Israelites, having made a troublesome acquaintance with the minutiæ of their ancient history in the form of "cram," was amusing himself by playfully exaggerating the notion of each speaker, while Anna begged them all to understand that he was only joking, when the laughter was interrupted by the bringing in of a letter for Mrs Davilow. A messenger had run with it in great haste from the Rectory. It enclosed a telegram, and as Mrs Davilow read and re-read it in silence and agitation, all eyes were turned on her with anxiety, but no one dared to speak. Looking up at last and seeing the young faces "painted with fear," she remembered that they might be imagin-

ing something worse than the truth, something like her own first dread which made her unable to understand what was written, and she said, with a sob which was half relief—

"My dears, Mr Grandcourt——" She paused an instant, and then began again, "Mr Grandcourt is drowned."

Rex started up as if a missile had been suddenly thrown into the room. He could not help himself, and Anna's first look was at him. But then, gathering some self-command while Mrs Davilow was reading what the Rector had written on the enclosing paper, he said—

"Can I do anything, aunt? Can I carry any word to my father from you?"

"Yes, dear. Tell him I will be ready—he is very good. He says he will go with me to Genoa—he will be here at half-past six. Jocosa and Alice, help me to get ready. She is safe—Gwendolen is safe—but she must be ill. I am sure she must be very ill. Rex, dear—Rex and Anna—go and tell your father I will be quite ready. I would not for the world lose another night. And bless him for being ready so soon. I can travel night and day till we get there."

Rex and Anna hurried away through the sunshine which was suddenly solemn to them, without uttering a word to each other; she chiefly possessed by solicitude about any reopening of his wound, he struggling with a tumultuary crowd of thoughts that were an offence against his better will. The oppression being undiminished when they were at the Rectory gate, he said—

"Nannie, I will leave you to say everything to my father. If he wants me immediately, let me know. I shall stay in the shrubbery for ten minutes —only ten minutes."

Who has been quite free from egoistic escapes of the imagination picturing desirable consequences on his own future in the presence of another's misfortune, sorrow, or death? The expected promotion or legacy is the common type of a temptation which makes speech and even prayer a severe avoidance of the most insistent thoughts, and sometimes raises an inward shame, a self-distaste, that is worse than any other form of unpleasant companionship. In Rex's nature the shame was immediate, and overspread like an ugly light all the hurrying images of what might come, which thrust themselves in with the idea that Gwendolen was again free—overspread them, perhaps, the more persistently because every phantasm of a hope was quickly nullified by a more substantial obstacle. Before the vision of "Gwendolen free" rose the impassable vision of "Gwendolen rich, exalted, courted;" and if in the former time, when both their lives were fresh, she had turned from his love with repugnance, what ground was there for supposing that her heart would be more open to him in the future?

These thoughts, which he wanted to master and suspend, were like a tumultuary ringing of opposing chimes that he could not escape from by running. During the last year he had brought himself into a state of calm resolve, and now it seemed that three words had been enough to undo all that difficult

work, and cast him back into the wretched fluctuations of a longing which he recognised as simply perturbing and hopeless. And at this moment the activity of such longing had an untimeliness that made it repulsive to his better self. Excuse poor Rex: it was not much more than eighteen months since he had been laid low by an archer who sometimes touches his arrow with a subtle, lingering poison. The disappointment of a youthful passion has effects as incalculable as those of small-pox, which may make one person plain and a genius, another less plain and more foolish, another plain without detriment to his folly, and leave perhaps the majority without obvious change. Everything depends—not on the mere fact of disappointment, but —on the nature affected and the force that stirs it. In Rex's well-endowed nature, brief as the hope had been, the passionate stirring had gone deep, and the effect of disappointment was revolutionary, though fraught with a beneficent new order which retained most of the old virtues: in certain respects he believed that it had finally determined the bias and colour of his life. Now, however, it seemed that his inward peace was hardly more stable than that of republican Florence, and his heart no better than the alarm-bell that made work slack and tumult busy.

Rex's love had been of that sudden, penetrating, clinging sort which the ancients knew and sung, and in singing made a fashion of talk for many moderns whose experience has been by no means of a fiery, dæmonic character. To have the con-

sciousness suddenly steeped with another's personality, to have the strongest inclinations possessed by an image which retains its dominance in spite of change and apart from worthiness—nay, to feel a passion which clings the faster for the tragic pangs inflicted by a cruel, recognised unworthiness—is a phase of love which in the feeble and common-minded has a repulsive likeness to a blind animalism insensible to the higher sway of moral affinity or heaven-lit admiration. But when this attaching force is present in a nature not of brutish unmodifiableness, but of a human dignity that can risk itself safely, it may even result in a devotedness not unfit to be called divine in a higher sense than the ancient. Phlegmatic rationality stares and shakes its head at these unaccountable prepossessions, but they exist as undeniably as the winds and waves, determining here a wreck and there a triumphant voyage.

This sort of passion had nested in the sweet-natured, strong Rex, and he had made up his mind to its companionship, as if it had been an object supremely dear, stricken dumb and helpless, and turning all the future of tenderness into a shadow of the past. But he had also made up his mind that his life was not to be pauperised because he had had to renounce one sort of joy; rather, he had begun life again with a new counting-up of the treasures that remained to him, and he had even felt a release of power such as may come from ceasing to be afraid of your own neck.

And now, here he was pacing the shrubbery, angry with himself that the sense of irrevocableness

in his lot, which ought in reason to have been as strong as ever, had been shaken by a change of circumstances that could make no change in relation to him. He told himself the truth quite roughly—

"She would never love me; and that is not the question—I could never approach her as a lover in her present position. I am exactly of no consequence at all, and am not likely to be of much consequence till my head is turning grey. But what has that to do with it? She would not have me on any terms, and I would not ask her. It is a meanness to be thinking about it now—no better than lurking about the battle-field to strip the dead; but there never was more gratuitous sinning. I have nothing to gain there — absolutely nothing. . . . Then why can't I face the facts, and behave as they demand, instead of leaving my father to suppose that there are matters he can't speak to me about, though I might be useful in them?"

That last thought made one wave with the impulse that sent Rex walking firmly into the house and through the open door of the study, where he saw his father packing a travelling-desk.

"Can I be of any use, sir?" said Rex, with rallied courage, as his father looked up at him.

"Yes, my boy; when I am gone, just see to my letters, and answer where necessary, and send me word of everything. Dymock will manage the parish very well, and you will stay with your mother, or, at least, go up and down again, till I come back, whenever that may be."

"You will hardly be very long, sir, I suppose,"

said Rex, beginning to strap a railway rug. "You will perhaps bring my cousin back to England?" He forced himself to speak of Gwendolen for the first time, and the Rector noticed the epoch with satisfaction.

"That depends," he answered, taking the subject as a matter of course between them. "Perhaps her mother may stay there with her, and I may come back very soon. This telegram leaves us in an ignorance which is rather anxious. But no doubt the arrangements of the will lately made are satisfactory, and there may possibly be an heir yet to be born. In any case, I feel confident that Gwendolen will be liberally—I should expect, splendidly—provided for."

"It must have been a great shock for her," said Rex, getting more resolute after the first twinge had been borne. "I suppose he was a devoted husband."

"No doubt of it," said the Rector, in his most decided manner. "Few men of his position would have come forward as he did under the circumstances."

Rex had never seen Grandcourt, had never been spoken to about him by any one of the family, and knew nothing of Gwendolen's flight from her suitor to Leubronn. He only knew that Grandcourt, being very much in love with her, had made her an offer in the first weeks of her sudden poverty, and had behaved very handsomely in providing for her mother and sisters. That was all very natural, and what Rex himself would have liked to do. Grandcourt

had been a lucky fellow, and had had some happiness before he got drowned. Yet Rex wondered much whether Gwendolen had been in love with the successful suitor, or had only forborne to tell him that she hated being made love to.

CHAPTER LIX.

"I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul remembering my good friends."
—SHAKESPEARE.

SIR HUGO MALLINGER was not so prompt in starting for Genoa as Mr Gascoigne had been, and Deronda on all accounts would not take his departure till he had seen the baronet. There was not only Grandcourt's death, but also the late crisis in his own life to make reasons why his oldest friend would desire to have the unrestrained communication of speech with him, for in writing he had not felt able to give any details concerning the mother who had come and gone like an apparition. It was not till the fifth evening that Deronda, according to telegram, waited for Sir Hugo at the station, where he was to arrive between eight and nine; and while he was looking forward to the sight of the kind, familiar face, which was part of his earliest memories, something like a smile, in spite of his late tragic experience, might have been detected in his eyes and the curve of his lips at the idea of Sir Hugo's pleasure in being now master of his estates, able to leave them to his

daughters, or at least—according to a view of inheritance which had just been strongly impressed on Deronda's imagination—to take makeshift feminine offspring as intermediate to a satisfactory heir in a grandson. We should be churlish creatures if we could have no joy in our fellow-mortals' joy, unless it were in agreement with our theory of righteous distribution and our highest ideal of human good: what sour corners our mouths would get—our eyes, what frozen glances! and all the while our own possessions and desires would not exactly adjust themselves to our ideal. We must have some comradeship with imperfection; and it is, happily, possible to feel gratitude even where we discern a mistake that may have been injurious, the vehicle of the mistake being an affectionate intention prosecuted through a lifetime of kindly offices. Deronda's feeling and judgment were strongly against the action of Sir Hugo in making himself the agent of a falsity —yes, a falsity: he could give no milder name to the concealment under which he had been reared. But the baronet had probably had no clear knowledge concerning the mother's breach of trust, and with his light, easy way of taking life, had held it a reasonable preference in her that her son should be made an English gentleman, seeing that she had the eccentricity of not caring to part from her child, and be to him as if she were not. Daniel's affectionate gratitude towards Sir Hugo made him wish to find grounds of excuse rather than blame; for it is as possible to be rigid in principle and tender in blame, as it is to suffer from the sight of things

hung awry, and yet to be patient with the hanger who sees amiss. If Sir Hugo in his bachelorhood had been beguiled into regarding children chiefly as a product intended to make life more agreeable to the full-grown, whose convenience alone was to be consulted in the disposal of them—why, he had shared an assumption which, if not formally avowed, was massively acted on at that date of the world's history; and Deronda, with all his keen memory of the painful inward struggle he had gone through in his boyhood, was able also to remember the many signs that his experience had been entirely shut out from Sir Hugo's conception. Ignorant kindness may have the effect of cruelty; but to be angry with it as if it were direct cruelty would be an ignorant *un*kindness, the most remote from Deronda's large imaginative lenience towards others. And perhaps now, after the searching scenes of the last ten days, in which the curtain had been lifted for him from the secrets of lives unlike his own, he was more than ever disposed to check that rashness of indignation or resentment which has an unpleasant likeness to the love of punishing. When he saw Sir Hugo's familiar figure descending from the railway carriage, the life-long affection, which had been well accustomed to make excuses, flowed in and submerged all newer knowledge that might have seemed fresh ground for blame.

"Well, Dan," said Sir Hugo, with a serious fervour, grasping Deronda's hand. He uttered no other words of greeting; there was too strong a rush of mutual consciousness. The next thing was

to give orders to the courier, and then to propose walking slowly in the mild evening, there being no hurry to get to the hotel.

"I have taken my journey easily, and am in excellent condition," he said, as he and Deronda came out under the starlight, which was still faint with the lingering sheen of day. "I didn't hurry in setting off, because I wanted to inquire into things a little, and so I got sight of your letter to Lady Mallinger before I started. But now, how is the widow?"

"Getting calmer," said Deronda. "She seems to be escaping the bodily illness that one might have feared for her, after her plunge and terrible excitement. Her uncle and mother came two days ago, and she is being well taken care of."

"Any prospect of an heir being born?"

"From what Mr Gascoigne said to me, I conclude not. He spoke as if it were a question whether the widow would have the estates for her life."

"It will not be much of a wrench to her affections, I fancy, this loss of the husband?" said Sir Hugo, looking round at Deronda.

"The suddenness of the death has been a great blow to her," said Deronda, quietly evading the question.

"I wonder whether Grandcourt gave her any notion what were the provisions of his will?" said Sir Hugo.

"Do you know what they are, sir?" parried Deronda.

"Yes, I do," said the baronet, quickly. "Gad! if there is no prospect of a legitimate heir, he has left everything to a boy he had by a Mrs Glasher; you know nothing about the affair, I suppose, but she was a sort of wife to him for a good many years, and there are three older children—girls. The boy is to take his father's name; he is Henleigh already, and he is to be Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt. The Mallinger will be of no use to him, I am happy to say; but the young dog will have more than enough with his fourteen years' minority—no need to have had holes filled up with my fifty thousand for Diplow that he had no right to; and meanwhile my beauty, the young widow, is to put up with a poor two thousand a-year and the house at Gadsmere —a nice kind of banishment for her if she chose to shut herself up there, which I don't think she will. The boy's mother has been living there of late years. I'm perfectly disgusted with Grandcourt. I don't know that I'm obliged to think the better of him because he's drowned, though, so far as my affairs are concerned, nothing in his life became him like the leaving it."

"In my opinion he did wrong when he married this wife—not in leaving his estates to the son," said Deronda, rather drily.

"I say nothing against his leaving the land to the lad," said Sir Hugo; "but since he had married this girl he ought to have given her a handsome provision, such as she could live on in a style fitted to the rank he had raised her to. She ought to have had four or five thousand a-year and the London

house for her life; that's what I should have done for her. I suppose, as she was penniless, her friends couldn't stand out for a settlement, else it's ill trusting to the will a man may make after he's married. Even a wise man generally lets some folly ooze out of him in his will—my father did, I know; and if a fellow has any spite or tyranny in him, he's likely to bottle off a good deal for keeping in that sort of document. It's quite clear Grandcourt meant that his death should put an extinguisher on his wife, if she bore him no heir."

"And, in the other case, I suppose everything would have been reversed—illegitimacy would have had the extinguisher?" said Deronda, with some scorn.

"Precisely — Gadsmere and the two thousand. It's queer. One nuisance is that Grandcourt has made me an executor; but seeing he was the son of my only brother, I can't refuse to act. And I shall mind it less, if I can be of any use to the widow. Lush thinks she was not in ignorance about the family under the rose, and the purport of the will. He hints that there was no very good understanding between the couple. But I fancy you are the man who knew most about what Mrs Grandcourt felt or did not feel — eh, Dan?" Sir Hugo did not put this question with his usual jocoseness, but rather with a lowered tone of interested inquiry; and Deronda felt that any evasion would be misinterpreted. He answered gravely—

"She was certainly not happy. They were un-

suited to each other. But as to the disposal of the property—from all I have seen of her, I should predict that she will be quite contented with it."

"Then she is not much like the rest of her sex; that's all I can say," said Sir Hugo, with a slight shrug. "However, she ought to be something extraordinary, for there must be an entanglement between your horoscope and hers — eh? When that tremendous telegram came, the first thing Lady Mallinger said was, 'How very strange that it should be Daniel who sends it!' But I have had something of the same sort in my own life. I was once at a foreign hotel where a lady had been left by her husband without money. When I heard of it, and came forward to help her, who should she be but an early flame of mine, who had been fool enough to marry an Austrian baron with a long moustache and short affection? But it was an affair of my own that called me there — nothing to do with knight-errantry, any more than your coming to Genoa had to do with the Grandcourts."

There was silence for a little while. Sir Hugo had begun to talk of the Grandcourts as the less difficult subject between himself and Deronda; but they were both wishing to overcome a reluctance to perfect frankness on the events which touched their relation to each other. Deronda felt that his letter, after the first interview with his mother, had been rather a thickening than a breaking of the ice, and that he ought to wait for the first opening to come from Sir Hugo. Just when they were about to lose sight of the port, the baronet

turned, and pausing as if to get a last view, said in a tone of more serious feeling—

"And about the main business of your coming to Genoa, Dan? You have not been deeply pained by anything you have learned, I hope? There is nothing that you feel need change your position in any way? You know, whatever happens to you must always be of importance to me."

"I desire to meet your goodness by perfect confidence, sir," said Deronda. "But I can't answer those questions truly by a simple yes or no. Much that I have heard about the past has pained me. And it has been a pain to meet and part with my mother in her suffering state, as I have been compelled to do. But it is no pain—it is rather a clearing up of doubts for which I am thankful, to know my parentage. As to the effect on my position, there will be no change in my gratitude to you, sir, for the fatherly care and affection you have always shown me. But to know that I was born a Jew, may have a momentous influence on my life, which I am hardly able to tell you of at present."

Deronda spoke the last sentence with a resolve that overcame some diffidence. He felt that the differences between Sir Hugo's nature and his own would have, by-and-by, to disclose themselves more markedly than had ever yet been needful. The baronet gave him a quick glance, and turned to walk on. After a few moments' silence, in which he had reviewed all the material in his memory which would enable him to interpret Deronda's words, he said—

"I have long expected something remarkable from you, Dan; but, for God's sake, don't go into any eccentricities! I can tolerate any man's difference of opinion, but let him tell it me without getting himself up as a lunatic. At this stage of the world, if a man wants to be taken seriously he must keep clear of melodrama. Don't misunderstand me. I am not suspecting you of setting up any lunacy on your own account. I only think you might easily be led arm in arm with a lunatic, especially if he wanted defending. You have a passion for people who are pelted, Dan. I'm sorry for them too; but so far as company goes, it's a bad ground of selection. However, I don't ask you to anticipate your inclination in anything you have to tell me. When you make up your mind to a course that requires money, I have some sixteen thousand pounds that have been accumulating for you over and above what you have been having the interest of as income. And now I am come, I suppose you want to get back to England as soon as you can?"

"I must go first to Mainz to get away a chest of my grandfather's, and perhaps to see a friend of his," said Deronda. "Although the chest has been lying there these twenty years, I have an unreasonable sort of nervous eagerness to get it away under my care, as if it were more likely now than before that something might happen to it. And perhaps I am the more uneasy, because I lingered after my mother left, instead of setting out immediately. Yet I can't regret that I was here—else Mrs Grandcourt would have had none but servants to act for her."

"Yes, yes," said Sir Hugo, with a flippancy which was an escape of some vexation hidden under his more serious speech; "I hope you are not going to set a dead Jew above a living Christian."

Deronda coloured, and repressed a retort. They were just turning into the *Italia*.

CHAPTER LX.

"But I shall say no more of this at this time; for this is to be felt and not to be talked of; and they who never touched it with their fingers may secretly perhaps laugh at it in their hearts and be never the wiser."—JEREMY TAYLOR.

The Roman Emperor in the legend put to death ten learned Israelites to avenge the sale of Joseph by his brethren. And there have always been enough of his kidney, whose piety lies in punishing who can see the justice of grudges but not of gratitude. For you shall never convince the stronger feeling that it hath not the stronger reason, or incline him who hath no love to believe that there is good ground for loving. As we may learn from the order of word-making, wherein *love* precedeth *lovable*.

WHEN Deronda presented his letter at the banking-house in the *Schuster Strasse* at Mainz, and asked for Joseph Kalonymos, he was presently shown into an inner room where, seated at a table arranging open letters, was the white-bearded man whom he had seen the year before in the synagogue at Frankfort. He wore his hat—it seemed to be the same old felt hat as before—and near him was a packed portmanteau with a wrap and overcoat upon it. On seeing Deronda enter he rose, but did not advance or put out his hand. Looking at him with small penetrating eyes which glittered like black gems in the midst of his yellowish face and white hair, he said in German—

"Good! It is now you who seek me, young man."

"Yes; I seek you with gratitude, as a friend of my grandfather's," said Deronda, "and I am under an obligation to you for giving yourself much trouble on my account." He spoke without difficulty in that liberal German tongue which takes many strange accents to its maternal bosom.

Kalonymos now put out his hand and said cordially, "So—you are no longer angry at being something more than an Englishman?"

"On the contrary. I thank you heartily for helping to save me from remaining in ignorance of my parentage, and for taking care of the chest that my grandfather left in trust for me."

"Sit down, sit down," said Kalonymos, in a quick under-tone, seating himself again, and pointing to a chair near him. Then deliberately laying aside his hat and showing a head thickly covered with white hair, he stroked and clutched his beard while he looked examiningly at the young face before him. The moment wrought strongly on Deronda's imaginative susceptibility: in the presence of one linked still in zealous friendship with the grandfather whose hope had yearned towards him when he was unborn, and who though dead was yet to speak with him in those written memorials which, says Milton, "contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul whose progeny they are," he seemed to himself to be touching the electric chain of his own ancestry; and he bore the scrutinising look of Kalonymos with a delighted awe,

something like what one feels in the solemn commemoration of acts done long ago but still telling markedly on the life of to-day. Impossible for men of duller fibre—men whose affection is not ready to diffuse itself through the wide travel of imagination, to comprehend, perhaps even to credit this sensibility of Deronda's; but it subsisted, like their own dulness, notwithstanding their lack of belief in it—and it gave his face an expression which seemed very satisfactory to the observer.

He said in Hebrew, quoting from one of the fine hymns in the Hebrew liturgy, "As thy goodness has been great to the former generations, even so may it be to the latter." Then after pausing a little he began, "Young man, I rejoice that I was not yet set off again on my travels, and that you are come in time for me to see the image of my friend as he was in his youth—no longer perverted from the fellowship of your people—no longer shrinking in proud wrath from the touch of him who seemed to be claiming you as a Jew. You come with thankfulness yourself to claim the kindred and heritage that wicked contrivance would have robbed you of. You come with a willing soul to declare, 'I am the grandson of Daniel Charisi.' Is it not so?"

"Assuredly it is," said Deronda. "But let me say that I should at no time have been inclined to treat a Jew with incivility simply because he was a Jew. You can understand that I shrank from saying to a stranger, 'I know nothing of my mother.'"

"A sin, a sin!" said Kalonymos, putting up his

hand and closing his eyes in disgust. "A robbery of our people—as when our youths and maidens were reared for the Roman Edom. But it is frustrated. I have frustrated it. When Daniel Charisi—may his Rock and his Redeemer guard him!—when Daniel Charisi was a stripling and I was a lad little above his shoulder, we made a solemn vow always to be friends. He said, 'Let us bind ourselves with duty, as if we were sons of the same mother.' That was his bent from first to last—as he said, to fortify his soul with bonds. It was a saying of his, 'Let us bind love with duty; for duty is the love of law; and law is the nature of the Eternal.' So we bound ourselves. And though we were much apart in our later life, the bond has never been broken. When he was dead, they sought to rob him; but they could not rob him of me. I rescued that remainder of him which he had prized and preserved for his offspring. And I have restored to him the offspring they had robbed him of. I will bring you the chest forthwith."

Kalonymos left the room for a few minutes, and returned with a clerk who carried the chest, set it down on the floor, drew off a leather cover, and went out again. It was not very large, but was made heavy by ornamental bracers and handles of gilt iron. The wood was beautifully incised with Arabic lettering.

"So!" said Kalonymos, returning to his seat. "And here is the curious key," he added, taking it from a small leathern bag. "Bestow it carefully. I trust you are methodic and wary." He gave Der-

onda the monitory and slightly suspicious look with which age is apt to commit any object to the keeping of youth.

"I shall be more careful of this than of any other property," said Deronda, smiling and putting the key in his breast-pocket. "I never before possessed anything that was a sign to me of so much cherished hope and effort. And I shall never forget that the effort was partly yours. Have you time to tell me more of my grandfather? Or shall I be trespassing in staying longer?"

"Stay yet a while. In an hour and eighteen minutes I start for Trieste," said Kalonymos, looking at his watch, "and presently my sons will expect my attention. Will you let me make you known to them, so that they may have the pleasure of showing hospitality to my friend's grandson? They dwell here in ease and luxury, though I choose to be a wanderer."

"I shall be glad if you will commend me to their acquaintance for some future opportunity," said Deronda. "There are pressing claims calling me to England—friends who may be much in need of my presence. I have been kept away from them too long by unexpected circumstances. But to know more of you and your family would be motive enough to bring me again to Mainz."

"Good! Me you will hardly find, for I am beyond my threescore years and ten, and I am a wanderer, carrying my shroud with me. But my sons and their children dwell here in wealth and unity. The days are changed for us in Mainz since our

people were slaughtered wholesale if they wouldn't be baptised wholesale: they are changed for us since Karl the Great fetched my ancestors from Italy to bring some tincture of knowledge to our rough German brethren. I and my contemporaries have had to fight for it too. Our youth fell on evil days; but this we have won: we increase our wealth in safety, and the learning of all Germany is fed and fattened by Jewish brains—though they keep not always their Jewish hearts. Have you been left altogether ignorant of your people's life, young man?"

"No," said Deronda, "I have lately, before I had any true suspicion of my parentage, been led to study everything belonging to their history with more interest than any other subject. It turns out that I have been making myself ready to understand my grandfather a little." He was anxious lest the time should be consumed before this circuitous course of talk could lead them back to the topic he most cared about. Age does not easily distinguish between what it needs to express and what youth needs to know—distance seeming to level the objects of memory; and keenly active as Joseph Kalonymos showed himself, an inkstand in the wrong place would have hindered his imagination from getting to Beyrout: he had been used to unite restless travel with punctilious observation. But Deronda's last sentence answered its purpose.

"So—you would perhaps have been such a man as he if your education had not hindered; for you are like him in features:—yet not altogether, young

man. He had an iron will in his face: it braced up everybody about him. When he was quite young he had already got one deep upright line in his brow. I see none of that in you. Daniel Charisi used to say, 'Better a wrong will than a wavering; better a steadfast enemy than an uncertain friend; better a false belief than no belief at all.' What he despised most was indifference. He had longer reasons than I can give you."

"Yet his knowledge was not narrow?" said Deronda, with a tacit reference to the usual excuse for indecision—that it comes from knowing too much.

"Narrow? no," said Kalonymos, shaking his head with a compassionate smile. "From his childhood upward, he drank in learning as easily as the plant sucks up water. But he early took to medicine and theories about life and health. He travelled to many countries, and spent much of his substance in seeing and knowing. What he used to insist on was that the strength and wealth of mankind depended on the balance of separateness and communication, and he was bitterly against our people losing themselves among the Gentiles; 'It's no better,' said he, 'than the many sorts of grain going back from their variety into sameness.' He mingled all sorts of learning; and in that he was like our Arabic writers in the golden time. We studied together, but he went beyond me. Though we were bosom friends, and he poured himself out to me, we were as different as the inside and the outside of the bowl. I stood up for no notions of my own: I took Charisi's sayings as I took the shape of the trees:

they were there, not to be disputed about. It came to the same thing in both of us: we were both faithful Jews, thankful not to be Gentiles. And since I was a ripe man, I have been what I am now, for all but age—loving to wander, loving transactions, loving to behold all things, and caring nothing about hardship. Charisi thought continually of our people's future: he went with all his soul into that part of our religion: I, not. So we have freedom, I am content. Our people wandered before they were driven. Young man, when I am in the East, I lie much on deck and watch the greater stars. The sight of them satisfies me. I know them as they rise, and hunger not to know more. Charisi was satisfied with no sight, but pieced it out with what had been before and what would come after. Yet we loved each other, and as he said, we bound our love with duty; we solemnly pledged ourselves to help and defend each other to the last. I have fulfilled my pledge." Here Kalonymos rose, and Deronda, rising also, said—

"And in being faithful to him you have caused justice to be done to me. It would have been a robbery of me too that I should never have known of the inheritance he had prepared for me. I thank you with my whole soul."

"Be worthy of him, young man. What is your vocation?" This question was put with a quick abruptness which embarrassed Deronda, who did not feel it quite honest to allege his law-reading as a vocation. He answered—

"I cannot say that I have any."

"Get one, get one. The Jew must be diligent. You will call yourself a Jew and profess the faith of your fathers?" said Kalonymos, putting his hand on Deronda's shoulder and looking sharply in his face.

"I shall call myself a Jew," said Deronda, deliberately, becoming slightly paler under the piercing eyes of his questioner. "But I will not say that I shall profess to believe exactly as my fathers have believed. Our fathers themselves changed the horizon of their belief and learned of other races. But I think I can maintain my grandfather's notion of separateness with communication. I hold that my first duty is to my own people, and if there is anything to be done towards restoring or perfecting their common life, I shall make that my vocation."

It happened to Deronda at that moment, as it has often happened to others, that the need for speech made an epoch in resolve. His respect for the questioner would not let him decline to answer, and by the necessity to answer he found out the truth for himself.

"Ah, you argue and you look forward—you are Daniel Charisi's grandson," said Kalonymos, adding a benediction in Hebrew.

With that they parted; and almost as soon as Deronda was in London, the aged man was again on shipboard, greeting the friendly stars without any eager curiosity.

CHAPTER LXI.

"Within the gentle heart Love shelters him,
As birds within the green shade of the grove.
Before the gentle heart, in Nature's scheme,
Love was not, nor the gentle heart ere Love."
—GUIDO GUINICELLI (*Rossetti's Translation*).

THERE was another house besides the white house at Pennicote, another breast besides Rex Gascoigne's, in which the news of Grandcourt's death caused both strong agitation and the effort to repress it.

It was Hans Meyrick's habit to send or bring in the 'Times' for his mother's reading. She was a great reader of news, from the widest-reaching politics to the list of marriages; the latter, she said, giving her the pleasant sense of finishing the fashionable novels without having read them, and seeing the heroes and heroines happy without knowing what poor creatures they were. On a Wednesday, there were reasons why Hans always chose to bring the paper, and to do so about the time that Mirah had nearly ended giving Mab her weekly lesson, avowing that he came then because he wanted to hear Mirah sing. But on the particular Wednes-

day now in question, after entering the house as quietly as usual with his latch-key, he appeared in the parlour, shaking the 'Times' aloft with a crackling noise, in remorseless interruption of Mab's attempt to render *Lascia ch'io pianga* with a remote imitation of her teacher. Piano and song ceased immediately: Mirah, who had been playing the accompaniment, involuntarily started up and turned round, the crackling sound, after the occasional trick of sounds, having seemed to her something thunderous; and Mab said—

"O-o-o, Hans! why do you bring a more horrible noise than my singing?"

"What on earth is the wonderful news?" said Mrs Meyrick, who was the only other person in the room. "Anything about Italy—anything about the Austrians giving up Venice?"

"Nothing about Italy, but something from Italy," said Hans, with a peculiarity in his tone and manner which set his mother interpreting. Imagine how some of us feel and behave when an event, not disagreeable, seems to be confirming and carrying out our private constructions. We say, "What do you think?" in a pregnant tone to some innocent person who has not embarked his wisdom in the same boat with ours, and finds our information flat.

"Nothing bad?" said Mrs Meyrick, anxiously, thinking immediately of Deronda; and Mirah's heart had been already clutched by the same thought.

"Not bad for anybody we care much about," said Hans, quickly; "rather uncommonly lucky, I think. I never knew anybody die conveniently before.

Considering what a dear gazelle I am, I am constantly wondering to find myself alive."

"Oh me, Hans!" said Mab, impatiently, "if you must talk of yourself, let it be behind your own back. What *is* it that has happened?"

"Duke Alfonso is drowned, and the Duchess is alive, that's all," said Hans, putting the paper before Mrs Meyrick, with his finger against a paragraph. "But more than all is—Deronda was at Genoa in the same hotel with them, and he saw her brought in by the fishermen, who had got her out of the water time enough to save her from any harm. It seems they saw her jump in after her husband—which was a less judicious action than I should have expected of the Duchess. However, Deronda is a lucky fellow in being there to take care of her."

Mirah had sunk on the music-stool again, with her eyelids down and her hands tightly clasped; and Mrs Meyrick, giving up the paper to Mab, said—

"Poor thing! she must have been fond of her husband, to jump in after him."

"It was an inadvertence—a little absence of mind," said Hans, creasing his face roguishly, and throwing himself into a chair not far from Mirah. "Who can be fond of a jealous baritone, with freezing glances, always singing asides?—that was the husband's *rôle*, depend upon it. Nothing can be neater than his getting drowned. The Duchess is at liberty now to marry a man with a fine head of hair, and glances that will melt instead of freezing her. And I shall be invited to the wedding."

Here Mirah started from her sitting posture, and

fixing her eyes on Hans with an angry gleam in them, she said, in the deeply-shaken voice of indignation—

"Mr Hans, you ought not to speak in that way. Mr Deronda would not like you to speak so. Why will you say he is lucky—why will you use words of that sort about life and death—when what is life to one is death to another? How do you know it would be lucky if he loved Mrs Grandcourt? It might be a great evil to him. She would take him away from my brother—I know she would. Mr Deronda would not call that lucky—to pierce my brother's heart."

All three were struck with the sudden transformation. Mirah's face, with a look of anger that might have suited Ithuriel, pale even to the lips that were usually so rich of tint, was not far from poor Hans, who sat transfixed, blushing under it as if he had been the girl, while he said nervously—

"I am a fool and a brute, and I withdraw every word. I'll go and hang myself like Judas—if it's allowable to mention him." Even in Hans's sorrowful moments, his improvised words had inevitably some drollery.

But Mirah's anger was not appeased: how could it be? She had burst into indignant speech as creatures in intense pain bite and make their teeth meet even through their own flesh, by way of making their agony bearable. She said no more, but, seating herself at the piano, pressed the sheet of music before her, as if she thought of beginning to play again.

It was Mab who spoke, while Mrs Meyrick's face seemed to reflect some of Hans's discomfort.

"Mirah is quite right to scold you, Hans. You are always taking Mr Deronda's name in vain. And it is horrible, joking in that way about his marrying Mrs Grandcourt. Men's minds must be very black, I think," ended Mab, with much scorn.

"Quite true, my dear," said Hans, in a low tone, rising and turning on his heel to walk towards the back window.

"We had better go on, Mab; you have not given your full time to the lesson," said Mirah, in a higher tone than usual. "Will you sing this again, or shall I sing it to you?"

"Oh, please sing it to me," said Mab, rejoiced to take no more notice of what had happened.

And Mirah immediately sang *Lascia ch'io pianga*, giving forth its melodious sobs and cries with new fulness and energy. Hans paused in his walk and leaned against the mantelpiece, keeping his eyes carefully away from his mother's. When Mirah had sung her last note and touched the last chord, she rose and said, "I must go home now. Ezra expects me."

She gave her hand silently to Mrs Meyrick and hung back a little, not daring to look at her, instead of kissing her as usual. But the little mother drew Mirah's face down to hers, and said soothingly, "God bless you, my dear." Mirah felt that she had committed an offence against Mrs Meyrick by angrily rebuking Hans, and mixed with the rest of her suffering was the sense that she had shown something

like a proud ingratitude, an unbecoming assertion of superiority. And her friend had divined this compunction.

Meanwhile Hans had seized his wide-awake, and was ready to open the door.

"Now, Hans," said Mab, with what was really a sister's tenderness cunningly disguised, "you are not going to walk home with Mirah. I am sure she would rather not. You are so dreadfully disagreeable to-day."

"I shall go to take care of her, if she does not forbid me," said Hans, opening the door.

Mirah said nothing, and when he had opened the outer door for her and closed it behind him, he walked by her side unforbidden. She had not the courage to begin speaking to him again—conscious that she had perhaps been unbecomingly severe in her words to him, yet finding only severer words behind them in her heart. Besides, she was pressed upon by a crowd of thoughts thrusting themselves forward as interpreters of that consciousness which still remained unuttered to herself.

Hans, on his side, had a mind equally busy. Mirah's anger had waked in him a new perception, and with it the unpleasant sense that he was a dolt not to have had it before. Suppose Mirah's heart were entirely preoccupied with Deronda in another character than that of her own and her brother's benefactor: the supposition was attended in Hans's mind with anxieties which, to do him justice, were not altogether selfish. He had a strong persuasion, which only direct evidence to the contrary could

have dissipated, that there was a serious attachment between Deronda and Mrs Grandcourt; he had pieced together many fragments of observation and gradually gathered knowledge, completed by what his sisters had heard from Anna Gascoigne, which convinced him not only that Mrs Grandcourt had a passion for Deronda, but also, notwithstanding his friend's austere self-repression, that Deronda's susceptibility about her was the sign of concealed love. Some men, having such a conviction, would have avoided allusions that could have roused that susceptibility; but Hans's talk naturally fluttered towards mischief, and he was given to a form of experiment on live animals which consisted in irritating his friends playfully. His experiments had ended in satisfying him that what he thought likely was true.

On the other hand, any susceptibility Deronda had manifested about a lover's attentions being shown to Mirah, Hans took to be sufficiently accounted for by the alleged reason, namely, her dependent position; for he credited his friend with all possible unselfish anxiety for those whom he could rescue or protect. And Deronda's insistence that Mirah would never marry one who was not a Jew necessarily seemed to exclude himself, since Hans shared the ordinary opinion, which he knew nothing to disturb, that Deronda was the son of Sir Hugo Mallinger.

Thus he felt himself in clearness about the state of Deronda's affections; but now, the events which really struck him as concurring towards the desirable union with Mrs Grandcourt, had called forth a

flash of revelation from Mirah—a betrayal of her passionate feeling on this subject which made him melancholy on her account as well as his own—yet on the whole less melancholy than if he had imagined Deronda's hopes fixed on her. It is not sublime, but it is common, for a man to see the beloved object unhappy because his rival loves another, with more fortitude and a milder jealousy than if he saw her entirely happy in his rival. At least it was so with the mercurial Hans, who fluctuated between the contradictory states, of feeling wounded because Mirah was wounded, and of being almost obliged to Deronda for loving somebody else. It was impossible for him to give Mirah any direct sign of the way in which he had understood her anger, yet he longed that his speechless companionship should be eloquent in a tender, penitent sympathy which is an admissible form of wooing a bruised heart.

Thus the two went side by side in a companionship that yet seemed an agitated communication, like that of two chords whose quick vibrations lie outside our hearing. But when they reached the door of Mirah's home, and Hans said "Good-bye," putting out his hand with an appealing look of penitence, she met the look with melancholy gentleness, and said, "Will you not come in and see my brother?"

Hans could not but interpret this invitation as a sign of pardon. He had not enough understanding of what Mirah's nature had been wrought into by her early experience, to divine how the very strength

of her late excitement had made it pass the more quickly into a resolute acceptance of pain. When he had said, "If you will let me," and they went in together, half his grief was gone, and he was spinning a little romance of how his devotion might make him indispensable to Mirah in proportion as Deronda gave his devotion elsewhere. This was quite fair, since his friend was provided for according to his own heart; and on the question of Judaism Hans felt thoroughly fortified:—who ever heard in tale or history that a woman's love went in the track of her race and religion? Moslem and Jewish damsels were always attracted towards Christians, and now if Mirah's heart had gone forth too precipitately towards Deronda, here was another case in point. Hans was wont to make merry with his own arguments, to call himself a Giaour, and antithesis the sole clue to events; but he believed a little in what he laughed at. And thus his bird-like hope, constructed on the lightest principles, soared again in spite of heavy circumstance.

They found Mordecai looking singularly happy, holding a closed letter in his hand, his eyes glowing with a quiet triumph which in his emaciated face gave the idea of a conquest over assailing death. After the greeting between him and Hans, Mirah put her arm round her brother's neck and looked down at the letter in his hand, without the courage to ask about it, though she felt sure that it was the cause of his happiness.

"A letter from Daniel Deronda," said Mordecai, answering her look. "Brief—only saying that he

hopes soon to return. Unexpected claims have detained him. The promise of seeing him again is like the bow in the cloud to me," continued Mordecai, looking at Hans; "and to you also it must be a gladness. For who has two friends like him?"

While Hans was answering Mirah slipped away to her own room; but not to indulge in any outburst of the passion within her. If the angels once supposed to watch the toilet of women had entered the little chamber with her and let her shut the door behind them, they would only have seen her take off her hat, sit down and press her hands against her temples as if she had suddenly reflected that her head ached; then rise to dash cold water on her eyes and brow and hair till her backward curls were full of crystal beads, while she had dried her brow and looked out like a freshly-opened flower from among the dewy tresses of the woodland; then give deep sighs of relief, and putting on her little slippers, sit still after that action for a couple of minutes, which seemed to her so long, so full of things to come, that she rose with an air of recollection, and went down to make tea.

Something of the old life had returned. She had been used to remember that she must learn her part, must go to rehearsal, must act and sing in the evening, must hide her feelings from her father; and the more painful her life grew, the more she had been used to hide. The force of her nature had long found its chief action in resolute endurance, and to-day the violence of feeling which had caused the first jet of anger had quickly transformed itself

into a steady facing of trouble, the well-known companion of her young years. But while she moved about and spoke as usual, a close observer might have discerned a difference between this apparent calm, which was the effect of restraining energy, and the sweet genuine calm of the months when she first felt a return of her infantine happiness.

Those who have been indulged by fortune and have always thought of calamity as what happens to others, feel a blind incredulous rage at the reversal of their lot, and half believe that their wild cries will alter the course of the storm. Mirah felt no such surprise when familiar Sorrow came back from brief absence, and sat down with her according to the old use and wont. And this habit of expecting trouble rather than joy, hindered her from having any persistent belief in opposition to the probabilities which were not merely suggested by Hans but were supported by her own private knowledge and long-growing presentiment. An attachment between Deronda and Mrs Grandcourt, to end in their future marriage, had the aspect of a certainty for her feeling. There had been no fault in him: facts had ordered themselves so that there was a tie between him and this woman who belonged to another world than her own and Ezra's—nay, who seemed another sort of being than Deronda, something foreign that would be a disturbance in his life instead of blending with it. Well, well—but if it could have been deferred so as to make no difference while Ezra was there! She did not know all the momentousness of the relation between Deronda

and her brother, but she had seen, and instinctively felt enough to forebode its being incongruous with any close tie to Mrs Grandcourt; at least this was the clothing that Mirah first gave to her mortal repugnance. But in the still, quick action of her consciousness, thoughts went on like changing states of sensation unbroken by her habitual acts; and this inward language soon said distinctly that the mortal repugnance would remain even if Ezra were secured from loss.

"What I have read about and sung about and seen acted, is happening to me — this that I am feeling is the love that makes jealousy:"—so impartially Mirah summed up the charge against herself. But what difference could this pain of hers make to any one else? It must remain as exclusively her own, and hidden, as her early yearning and devotion towards her lost mother. But unlike that devotion, it was something that she felt to be a misfortune of her nature—a discovery that what should have been pure gratitude and reverence had sunk into selfish pain, that the feeling she had hitherto delighted to pour out in words was degraded into something she was ashamed to betray —an absurd longing that she who had received all and given nothing should be of importance where she was of no importance—an angry feeling towards another woman who possessed the good she wanted. But what notion, what vain reliance could it be that had lain darkly within her and was now burning itself into sight as disappointment and jealousy? It was as if her soul had been steeped in poisonous

passion by forgotten dreams of deep sleep, and now flamed out in this unaccountable misery. For with her waking reason she had never entertained what seemed the wildly unfitting thought that Deronda could love her. The uneasiness she had felt before had been comparatively vague and easily explained as part of a general regret that he was only a visitant in her and her brother's world, from which the world where his home lay was as different as a portico with lights and lacqueys was different from the door of a tent, where the only splendour came from the mysterious inaccessible stars. But her feeling was no longer vague: the cause of her pain —the image of Mrs Grandcourt by Deronda's side drawing him farther and farther into the distance, was as definite as pincers on her flesh. In the Psyche-mould of Mirah's frame there rested a fervid quality of emotion sometimes rashly supposed to require the bulk of a Cleopatra; her impressions had the thoroughness and tenacity that give to the first selection of passionate feeling the character of a life-long faithfulness. And now a selection had declared itself, which gave love a cruel heart of jealousy: she had been used to a strong repugnance towards certain objects that surrounded her, and to walk inwardly aloof from them while they touched her sense. And now her repugnance concentrated itself on Mrs Grandcourt, of whom she involuntarily conceived more evil than she knew. "I could bear everything that used to be—but this is worse—this is worse,—I used not to have horrible feelings!" said the poor child in a loud whisper to

her pillow. Strange, that she should have to pray against any feeling which concerned Deronda!

But this conclusion had been reached through an evening spent in attending to Mordecai, whose exaltation of spirit in the prospect of seeing his friend again, disposed him to utter many thoughts aloud to Mirah, though such communication was often interrupted by intervals apparently filled with an inward utterance that animated his eyes and gave an occasional silent action to his lips. One thought especially occupied him.

"Seest thou, Mirah," he said once, after a long silence, "the *Shemah*, wherein we briefly confess the divine Unity, is the chief devotional exercise of the Hebrew; and this made our religion the fundamental religion for the whole world; for the divine Unity embraced as its consequence the ultimate unity of mankind. See, then — the nation which has been scoffed at for its separateness, has given a binding theory to the human race. Now, in complete unity a part possesses the whole as the whole possesses every part: and in this way human life is tending toward the image of the Supreme Unity: for as our life becomes more spiritual by capacity of thought, and joy therein, possession tends to become more universal, being independent of gross material contact; so that in a brief day the soul of a man may know in fuller volume the good which has been and is, nay, is to come, than all he could possess in a whole life where he had to follow the creeping paths of the senses. In this moment, my sister, I hold the joy of another's future

within me: a future which these eyes will not see, and which my spirit may not then recognise as mine. I recognise it now, and love it so, that I can lay down this poor life upon its altar and say: 'Burn, burn indiscernibly into that which shall be, which is my love and not me.' Dost thou understand, Mirah?"

"A little," said Mirah, faintly, "but my mind is too poor to have felt it."

"And yet," said Mordecai, rather insistently, "women are specially framed for the love which feels possession in renouncing, and is thus a fit image of what I mean. Somewhere in the later *Midrash*, I think, is the story of a Jewish maiden who loved a Gentile king so well, that this was what she did:—She entered into prison and changed clothes with the woman who was beloved by the king, that she might deliver that woman from death by dying in her stead, and leave the king to be happy in his love which was not for her. This is the surpassing love, that loses self in the object of love."

"No, Ezra, no," said Mirah, with low-toned intensity, "that was not it. She wanted the king when she was dead to know what she had done, and feel that she was better than the other. It was her strong self, wanting to conquer, that made her die."

Mordecai was silent a little, and then argued—

"That might be, Mirah. But if she acted so, believing the king would never know?"

"You can make the story so in your mind, Ezra,

because you are great, and like to fancy the greatest that could be. But I think it was not really like that. The Jewish girl must have had jealousy in her heart, and she wanted somehow to have the first place in the king's mind. That is what she would die for."

"My sister, thou hast read too many plays, where the writers delight in showing the human passions as indwelling demons, unmixed with the relenting and devout elements of the soul. Thou judgest by the plays, and not by thy own heart, which is like our mother's."

Mirah made no answer.

CHAPTER LXII.

"Das Glück ist eine leichte Dirne,
Und weilt nicht gern am selben Ort;
Sie streicht das Haar dir von der Stirne
Und küsst dich rasch und flattert fort.

Frau Unglück hat im Gegentheile
Dich liebefest an's Herz gedrückt;
Sie sagt, sie habe keine Eile,
Setzt sich zu dir ans Bett und strickt."

—HEINE.

SOMETHING which Mirah had lately been watching for as the fulfilment of a threat, seemed now the continued visit of that familiar sorrow which had lately come back, bringing abundant luggage.

Turning out of Knightsbridge, after singing at a charitable morning concert in a wealthy house, where she had been recommended by Klesmer, and where there had been the usual groups outside to see the departing company, she began to feel herself dogged by footsteps that kept an even pace with her own. Her concert dress being simple black, over which she had thrown a dust-cloak, could not make her an object of unpleasant attention, and render walking an imprudence; but this reflection did not occur to Mirah: another kind of alarm lay uppermost in her mind. She immediately

thought of her father, and could no more look round than if she had felt herself tracked by a ghost. To turn and face him would be voluntarily to meet the rush of emotions which beforehand seemed intolerable. If it were her father, he must mean to claim recognition, and he would oblige her to face him. She must wait for that compulsion. She walked on, not quickening her pace—of what use was that?—but picturing what was about to happen as if she had the full certainty that the man behind her was her father; and along with her picturing went a regret that she had given her word to Mrs Meyrick not to use any concealment about him. The regret at last urged her, at least, to try and hinder any sudden betrayal that would cause her brother an unnecessary shock. Under the pressure of this motive, she resolved to turn before she reached her own door, and firmly will the encounter instead of merely submitting to it. She had already reached the entrance of the small square where her home lay, and had made up her mind to turn, when she felt her embodied presentiment getting closer to her, then slipping to her side, grasping her wrist, and saying, with a persuasive curl of accent, "Mirah!"

She paused at once without any start; it was the voice she expected, and she was meeting the expected eyes. Her face was as grave as if she had been looking at her executioner, while his was adjusted to the intention of soothing and propitiating her. Once a handsome face, with bright colour, it was now sallow and deep-lined,

and had that peculiar impress of impudent suavity which comes from courting favour while accepting disrespect. He was lightly made and active, with something of youth about him which made the signs of age seem a disguise; and in reality he was hardly fifty-seven. His dress was shabby, as when she had seen him before. The presence of this unreverend father now, more than ever, affected Mirah with the mingled anguish of shame and grief, repulsion and pity—more than ever, now that her own world was changed into one where there was no comradeship to fence him from scorn and contempt.

Slowly, with a sad, tremulous voice, she said, "It is you, father."

"Why did you run away from me, child?" he began, with rapid speech which was meant to have a tone of tender remonstrance, accompanied with various quick gestures like an abbreviated finger-language. "What were you afraid of? You knew I never made you do anything against your will. It was for your sake I broke up your engagement in the Vorstadt, because I saw it didn't suit you, and you repaid me by leaving me to the bad times that came in consequence. I had made an easier engagement for you at the Vorstadt Theatre in Dresden: I didn't tell you, because I wanted to take you by surprise. And you left me planted there — obliged to make myself scarce because I had broken contract. That was hard lines for me, after I had given up everything for the sake of getting you an education which was to be a fortune to you. What father devoted himself to his daughter

more than I did to you? You know how I bore that disappointment in your voice, and made the best of it; and when I had nobody besides you, and was getting broken, as a man must who has had to fight his way with his brains—you chose that time to leave me. Who else was it you owed everything to, if not to me? and where was your feeling in return? For what my daughter cared, I might have died in a ditch."

Lapidoth stopped short here, not from lack of invention, but because he had reached a pathetic climax, and gave a sudden sob, like a woman's, taking out hastily an old yellow silk handkerchief. He really felt that his daughter had treated him ill—a sort of sensibility which is naturally strong in unscrupulous persons, who put down what is owing to them, without any *per contra*. Mirah, in spite of that sob, had energy enough not to let him suppose that he deceived her. She answered more firmly, though it was the first time she had ever used accusing words to him.

"You know why I left you, father; and I had reason to distrust you, because I felt sure that you had deceived my mother. If I could have trusted you, I would have stayed with you and worked for you."

"I never meant to deceive your mother, Mirah," said Lapidoth, putting back his handkerchief, but beginning with a voice that seemed to struggle against further sobbing. "I meant to take you back to her, but chances hindered me just at the time, and then there came information of her death.

It was better for you that I should stay where I was, and your brother could take care of himself. Nobody had any claim on me but you. I had word of your mother's death from a particular friend, who had undertaken to manage things for me, and I sent him over money to pay expenses. There's one chance, to be sure" — Lapidoth had quickly conceived that he must guard against something unlikely, yet possible — "he may have written me lies for the sake of getting the money out of me."

Mirah made no answer; she could not bear to utter the only true one — "I don't believe one word of what you say"—and she simply showed a wish that they should walk on, feeling that their standing still might draw down unpleasant notice. Even as they walked along, their companionship might well have made a passer-by turn back to look at them. The figure of Mirah, with her beauty set off by the quiet, careful dress of an English lady, made a strange pendant to this shabby, foreign-looking, eager, and gesticulating man, who withal had an ineffaceable jauntiness of air, perhaps due to the bushy curls of his grizzled hair, the smallness of his hands and feet, and his light walk.

"You seem to have done well for yourself, Mirah? *You* are in no want, I see," said the father, looking at her with emphatic examination.

"Good friends who found me in distress have helped me to get work," said Mirah, hardly knowing what she actually said, from being occupied

with what she would presently have to say. "I give lessons. I have sung in private houses. I have just been singing at a private concert." She paused, and then added, with significance, "I have very good friends, who know all about me."

"And you would be ashamed they should see your father in this plight? No wonder. I came to England with no prospect, but the chance of finding you. It was a mad quest; but a father's heart is superstitious — feels a loadstone drawing it somewhere or other. I might have done very well, staying abroad: when I hadn't you to take care of, I could have rolled or settled as easily as a ball; but it's hard being lonely in the world, when your spirit's beginning to break. And I thought my little Mirah would repent leaving her father, when she came to look back. I've had a sharp pinch to work my way; I don't know what I shall come down to next. Talents like mine are no use in this country. When a man's getting out at elbows nobody will believe in him. I couldn't get any decent employ with my appearance. I've been obliged to go pretty low for a shilling already."

Mirah's anxiety was quick enough to imagine her father's sinking into a further degradation, which she was bound to hinder if she could. But before she could answer his string of inventive sentences, delivered with as much glibness as if they had been learned by rote, he added promptly—

"Where do you live, Mirah?"

"Here, in this square. We are not far from the house."

"In lodgings?"

"Yes."

"Any one to take care of you?"

"Yes," said Mirah again, looking full at the keen face which was turned towards hers—"my brother."

The father's eyelids fluttered as if the lightning had come across them, and there was a slight movement of the shoulders. But he said, after a just perceptible pause: "Ezra? How did you know—how did you find him?"

"That would take long to tell. Here we are at the door. My brother would not wish me to close it on you."

Mirah was already on the door-step, but had her face turned towards her father, who stood below her on the pavement. Her heart had begun to beat faster with the prospect of what was coming in the presence of Ezra; and already in this attitude of giving leave to the father whom she had been used to obey—in this sight of him standing below her, with a perceptible shrinking from the admission which he had been indirectly asking for, she had a pang of the peculiar, sympathetic humiliation and shame—the stabbed heart of reverence—which belongs to a nature intensely filial.

"Stay a minute, *Liebchen*," said Lapidoth, speaking in a lowered tone; "what sort of man has Ezra turned out?"

"A good man—a wonderful man," said Mirah, with slow emphasis, trying to master the agitation which made her voice more tremulous as she went on. She felt urged to prepare her father for the

complete penetration of himself which awaited him. "But he was very poor when my friends found him for me—a poor workman. Once—twelve years ago—he was strong and happy, going to the East, which he loved to think of; and my mother called him back because—because she had lost me. And he went to her, and took care of her through great trouble, and worked for her till she died—died in grief. And Ezra, too, had lost his health and strength. The cold had seized him coming back to my mother, because she was forsaken. For years he has been getting weaker—always poor, always working—but full of knowledge, and great-minded. All who come near him honour him. To stand before him, is like standing before a prophet of God"—Mirah ended with difficulty, her heart throbbing—"falsehoods are no use."

She had cast down her eyes that she might not see her father while she spoke the last words—unable to bear the ignoble look of frustration that gathered in his face. But he was none the less quick in invention and decision.

"Mirah, *Liebchen*," he said, in the old caressing way, "shouldn't you like me to make myself a little more respectable before my son sees me? If I had a little sum of money, I could fit myself out and come home to you as your father ought, and then I could offer myself for some decent place. With a good shirt and coat on my back, people would be glad enough to have me. I could offer myself for a courier, if I didn't look like a broken-down mountebank. I should like to be with my children, and

forget and forgive. But you have never seen your father look like this before. If you had ten pounds at hand—or I could appoint you to bring it me somewhere—I could fit myself out by the day after to-morrow."

Mirah felt herself under a temptation which she must try to overcome. She answered, obliging herself to look at him again—

"I don't like to deny you what you ask, father; but I have given a promise not to do things for you in secret. It *is* hard to see you looking needy; but we will bear that for a little while; and then you can have new clothes, and we can pay for them." Her practical sense made her see now what was Mrs Meyrick's wisdom in exacting a promise from her.

Lapidoth's good humour gave way a little. He said with a sneer, "You are a hard and fast young lady—you've been learning useful virtues—keeping promises not to help your father with a pound or two when you are getting money to dress yourself in silk—your father who made an idol of you, and gave up the best part of his life to providing for you."

"It seems cruel—I know it seems cruel," said Mirah, feeling this a worse moment than when she meant to drown herself. Her lips were suddenly pale. "But, father, it is more cruel to break the promises people trust in. That broke my mother's heart—it has broken Ezra's life. You and I must eat now this bitterness from what has been. Bear it. Bear to come in and be cared for as you are."

"To-morrow, then," said Lapidoth, almost turning on his heel away from this pale, trembling daughter, who seemed now to have got the inconvenient world to back her; but he quickly turned on it again, with his hands feeling about restlessly in his pockets, and said, with some return to his appealing tone, "I'm a little cut up with all this, Mirah. I shall get up my spirits by to-morrow. If you've a little money in your pocket, I suppose it isn't against your promise to give me a trifle—to buy a cigar with."

Mirah could not ask herself another question—could not do anything else than put her cold trembling hands in her pocket for her *portemonnaie* and hold it out. Lapidoth grasped it at once, pressed her fingers the while, said, "Good-bye, my little girl—to-morrow then!" and left her. He had not taken many steps before he looked carefully into all the folds of the purse, found two half-sovereigns and odd silver, and, pasted against the folding cover, a bit of paper on which Ezra had inscribed, in a beautiful Hebrew character, the name of his mother, the days of her birth, marriage, and death, and the prayer, "May Mirah be delivered from evil." It was Mirah's liking to have this little inscription on many articles that she used. The father read it, and had a quick vision of his marriage day, and the bright, unblamed young fellow he was in that time; teaching many things, but expecting by-and-by to get money more easily by writing; and very fond of his beautiful bride Sara—crying when she expected him to cry, and reflecting every

phase of her feeling with mimetic susceptibility. Lapidoth had travelled a long way from that young self, and thought of all that this inscription signified with an unemotional memory, which was like the ocular perception of a touch to one who has lost the sense of touch, or like morsels on an untasting palate, having shape and grain, but no flavour. Among the things we may gamble away in a lazy selfish life is the capacity for ruth, compunction, or any unselfish regret—which we may come to long for as one in slow death longs to feel laceration, rather than be conscious of a widening margin where consciousness once was. Mirah's purse was a handsome one—a gift to her, which she had been unable to reflect about giving away—and Lapidoth presently found himself outside of his reverie, considering what the purse would fetch in addition to the sum it contained, and what prospect there was of his being able to get more from his daughter without submitting to adopt a penitential form of life under the eyes of that formidable son. On such a subject his susceptibilities were still lively.

Meanwhile Mirah had entered the house with her power of reticence overcome by the cruelty of her pain. She found her brother quietly reading and sifting old manuscripts of his own, which he meant to consign to Deronda. In the reaction from the long effort to master herself, she fell down before him and clasped his knees, sobbing, and crying, "Ezra, Ezra!"

He did not speak. His alarm for her was spending itself on conceiving the cause of her distress,

the more striking from the novelty in her of this violent manifestation. But Mirah's own longing was to be able to speak and tell him the cause. Presently she raised her hand, and still sobbing, said brokenly—

"Ezra, my father! our father! He followed me. I wanted him to come in. I said you would let him come in. And he said No, he would not—not now, but to-morrow. And he begged for money from me. And I gave him my purse, and he went away."

Mirah's words seemed to herself to express all the misery she felt in them. Her brother found them less grievous than his preconceptions, and said gently, "Wait for calm, Mirah, and then tell me all,"—putting off her hat and laying his hands tenderly on her head. She felt the soothing influence, and in a few minutes told him as exactly as she could all that had happened.

"He will not come to-morrow," said Mordecai. Neither of them said to the other what they both thought, namely, that he might watch for Mirah's outgoings and beg from her again.

"Seest thou," he presently added, "our lot is the lot of Israel. The grief and the glory are mingled as the smoke and the flame. It is because we children have inherited the good that we feel the evil. These things are wedded for us, as our father was wedded to our mother."

The surroundings were of Brompton, but the voice might have come from a Rabbi transmitting the sentences of an elder time to be registered in *Babli*—by which (to our ears) affectionate-sounding

diminutive is meant the voluminous Babylonian Talmud. "The Omnipresent," said a Rabbi, "is occupied in making marriages." The levity of the saying lies in the ear of him who hears it; for by marriages the speaker meant all the wondrous combinations of the universe whose issue makes our good and evil.

CHAPTER LXIII.

"Moses, trotz seiner Befeindung der Kunst, dennoch selber ein grosser Künstler war und den wahren Künstlergeist besass. Nur war dieser Künstlergeist bei ihm, wie bei seinen ägyptischen Landsleuten, nur auf das Colossale und Unverwüstliche gerichtet. Aber nicht wie die Aegypter formirte er seine Kunstwerke aus Backstein und Granit, sondern er baute Menschenpyramiden, er meisselte Menschen Obelisken, er nahm einen armen Hirtenstamm und Schuf daraus ein Volk, das ebenfalls den Jahrhunderten trotzen sollte . . . er Schuf Israel."—HEINE: *Gestandnisse.*

IMAGINE the difference in Deronda's state of mind when he left England and when he returned to it. He had set out for Genoa in total uncertainty how far the actual bent of his wishes and affections would be encouraged—how far the claims revealed to him might draw him into new paths, far away from the tracks his thoughts had lately been pursuing with a consent of desire which uncertainty made dangerous. He came back with something like a discovered charter warranting the inherited right that his ambition had begun to yearn for: he came back with what was better than freedom —with a duteous bond which his experience had been preparing him to accept gladly, even if it had been attended with no promise of satisfying a secret passionate longing never yet allowed to

grow into a hope. But now he dared avow to himself the hidden selection of his love. Since the hour when he left the house at Chelsea in full-hearted silence under the effect of Mirah's farewell look and words—their exquisite appealingness stirring in him that deeply-laid care for womanhood which had begun when his own lip was like a girl's—her hold on his feeling had helped him to be blameless in word and deed under the difficult circumstances we know of. There seemed no likelihood that he could ever woo this creature who had become dear to him amidst associations that forbade wooing; yet she had taken her place in his soul as a beloved type—reducing the power of other fascination and making a difference in it that became deficiency. The influence had been continually strengthened. It had lain in the course of poor Gwendolen's lot that her dependence on Deronda tended to rouse in him the enthusiasm of self-martyring pity rather than of personal love, and his less constrained tenderness flowed with the fuller stream towards an indwelling image in all things unlike Gwendolen. Still more, his relation to Mordecai had brought with it a new nearness to Mirah which was not the less agitating because there was no apparent change in his position towards her; and she had inevitably been bound up in all the thoughts that made him shrink from an issue disappointing to her brother. This process had not gone on unconsciously in Deronda: he was conscious of it as we are of some covetousness that it would be better to nullify by encouraging other

thoughts than to give it the insistency of confession even to ourselves: but the jealous fire had leaped out at Hans's pretensions, and when his mother accused him of being in love with a Jewess, any evasion suddenly seemed an infidelity. His mother had compelled him to a decisive acknowledgment of his love, as Joseph Kalonymos had compelled him to a definite expression of his resolve. This new state of decision wrought on Deronda with a force which surprised even himself. There was a release of all the energy which had long been spent in self-checking and suppression because of doubtful conditions; and he was ready to laugh at his own impetuosity when, as he neared England on his way from Mainz, he felt the remaining distance more and more of an obstruction. It was as if he had found an added soul in finding his ancestry—his judgment no longer wandering in the mazes of impartial sympathy, but choosing, with that noble partiality which is man's best strength, the closer fellowship that makes sympathy practical—exchanging that bird's-eye reasonableness which soars to avoid preference and loses all sense of quality, for the generous reasonableness of drawing shoulder to shoulder with men of like inheritance. He wanted now to be again with Mordecai, to pour forth instead of restraining his feeling, to admit agreement and maintain dissent, and all the while to find Mirah's presence without the embarrassment of obviously seeking it, to see her in the light of a new possibility, to interpret her looks and words from a new starting-point. He

was not greatly alarmed about the effect of Hans's attentions, but he had a presentiment that her feeling towards himself had from the first lain in a channel from which it was not likely to be diverted into love. To astonish a woman by turning into her lover when she has been thinking of you merely as a Lord Chancellor is what a man naturally shrinks from: he is anxious to create an easier transition.

What wonder that Deronda saw no other course than to go straight from the London railway station to the lodgings in that small square in Brompton? Every argument was in favour of his losing no time. He had promised to run down the next day to see Lady Mallinger at the Abbey, and it was already sunset. He wished to deposit the precious chest with Mordecai, who would study its contents, both in his absence and in company with him; and that he should pay this visit without pause would gratify Mordecai's heart. Hence, and for other reasons, it gratified Deronda's heart. The strongest tendencies of his nature were rushing in one current—the fervent affectionateness which made him delight in meeting the wish of beings near to him, and the imaginative need of some far-reaching relation to make the horizon of his immediate, daily acts. It has to be admitted that in this classical, romantic, world-historic position of his, bringing as it were from its hiding-place his hereditary armour, he wore — but so, one must suppose, did the most ancient heroes whether Semitic or Japhetic—the summer costume of his contemporaries. He did not

reflect that the drab tints were becoming to him, for he rarely went to the expense of such thinking; but his own depth of colouring, which made the becomingness, got an added radiance in the eyes, a fleeting and returning glow in the skin, as he entered the house, wondering what exactly he should find. He made his entrance as noiseless as possible.

It was the evening of that same afternoon on which Mirah had had the interview with her father. Mordecai, penetrated by her grief, and also by the sad memories which the incident had awakened, had not resumed his task of sifting papers: some of them had fallen scattered on the floor in the first moments of anxiety, and neither he nor Mirah had thought of laying them in order again. They had sat perfectly still together, not knowing how long; while the clock ticked on the mantelpiece, and the light was fading. Mirah, unable to think of the food that she ought to have been taking, had not moved since she had thrown off her dust-cloak and sat down beside Mordecai with her hand in his, while he had laid his head backward, with closed eyes and difficult breathing, looking, Mirah thought, as he would look when the soul within him could no longer live in its straitened home. The thought that his death might be near was continually visiting her when she saw his face in this way, without its vivid animation; and now, to the rest of her grief was added the regret that she had been unable to control the violent outburst which had shaken him. She sat watching him—her oval cheeks pallid, her

eyes with the sorrowful brilliancy left by young tears, her curls in as much disorder as a just-wakened child's—watching that emaciated face, where it might have been imagined that a veil had been drawn never to be lifted, as if it were her dead joy which had left her strong enough to live on in sorrow. And life at that moment stretched before Mirah with more than a repetition of former sadness. The shadow of the father was there, and more than that, a double bereavement — of one living as well as one dead.

But now the door was opened, and while none entered, a well-known voice said: "Daniel Deronda —may he come in?"

"Come! come!" said Mordecai, immediately rising with an irradiated face and opened eyes—apparently as little surprised as if he had seen Deronda in the morning, and expected this evening visit; while Mirah started up blushing with confused, half-alarmed expectation.

Yet when Deronda entered, the sight of him was like the clearness after rain: no clouds to come could hinder the cherishing beam of that moment. As he held out his right hand to Mirah, who was close to her brother's left, he laid his other hand on Mordecai's right shoulder, and stood so a moment, holding them both at once, uttering no word, but reading their faces, till he said anxiously to Mirah, "Has anything happened?—any trouble?"

"Talk not of trouble now," said Mordecai, saving her from the need to answer. "There is joy in your face—let the joy be ours."

Mirah thought, "It is for something he cannot tell us." But they all sat down, Deronda drawing a chair close in front of Mordecai.

"That is true," he said, emphatically. "I have a joy which will remain to us even in the worst trouble. I did not tell you the reason of my journey abroad, Mordecai, because—never mind—I went to learn my parentage. And you were right. I am a Jew."

The two men clasped hands with a movement that seemed part of the flash from Mordecai's eyes, and passed through Mirah like an electric shock. But Deronda went on without pause, speaking from Mordecai's mind as much as from his own—

"We have the same people. Our souls have the same vocation. We shall not be separated by life or by death."

Mordecai's answer was uttered in Hebrew, and in no more than a loud whisper. It was in the liturgical words which express the religious bond: "Our God, and the God of our fathers."

The weight of feeling pressed too strongly on that ready-winged speech which usually moved in quick adaptation to every stirring of his fervour.

Mirah fell on her knees by her brother's side, and looked at his now illuminated face, which had just before been so deathly. The action was an inevitable outlet of the violent reversal from despondency to a gladness which came over her as solemnly as if she had been beholding a religious rite. For the moment she thought of the effect on her own life only through the effect on her brother.

"And it is not only that I am a Jew," Deronda went on, enjoying one of those rare moments when our yearnings and our acts can be completely one, and the real we behold is our ideal good; "but I come of a strain that has ardently maintained the fellowship of our race—a line of Spanish Jews that has borne many students and men of practical power. And I possess what will give us a sort of communion with them. My grandfather, Daniel Charisi, preserved manuscripts, family records stretching far back, in the hope that they would pass into the hands of his grandson. And now his hope is fulfilled, in spite of attempts to thwart it by hiding my parentage from me. I possess the chest containing them, with his own papers, and it is down below in this house. I mean to leave it with you, Mordecai, that you may help me to study the manuscripts. Some of them I can read easily enough—those in Spanish and Italian. Others are in Hebrew, and, I think, Arabic; but there seem to be Latin translations. I was only able to look at them cursorily while I stayed at Mainz. We will study them together."

Deronda ended with that bright smile which, beaming out from the habitual gravity of his face, seemed a revelation (the reverse of the continual smile that discredits all expression). But when this happy glance passed from Mordecai to rest on Mirah, it acted like a little too much sunshine, and made her change her attitude. She had knelt under an impulse with which any personal embarrassment was incongruous, and especially any thoughts about

how Mrs Grandcourt might stand to this new aspect of things—thoughts which made her colour under Deronda's glance, and rise to take her seat again in her usual posture of crossed hands and feet, with the effort to look as quiet as possible. Deronda, equally sensitive, imagined that the feeling of which he was conscious, had entered too much into his eyes, and had been repugnant to her. He was ready enough to believe that any unexpected manifestation might spoil her feeling towards him—and then his precious relation to brother and sister would be marred. If Mirah could have no love for him, any advances of love on his part would make her wretched in that continual contact with him which would remain inevitable.

While such feelings were pulsating quickly in Deronda and Mirah, Mordecai, seeing nothing in his friend's presence and words but a blessed fulfilment, was already speaking with his old sense of enlargement in utterance—

"Daniel, from the first, I have said to you, we know not all the pathways. Has there not been a meeting among them, as of the operations in one soul, where an idea being born and breathing draws the elements towards it, and is fed and grows? For all things are bound together in that Omnipresence which is the place and habitation of the world, and events are as a glass where-through our eyes see some of the pathways. And if it seems that the erring and unloving wills of men have helped to prepare you, as Moses was prepared, to serve your people the better, that depends on another order

than the law which must guide our footsteps. For the evil will of man makes not a people's good except by stirring the righteous will of man; and beneath all the clouds with which our thought encompasses the Eternal, this is clear — that a people can be blessed only by having counsellors and a multitude whose will moves in obedience to the laws of justice and love. For see, now, it was your loving will that made a chief pathway, and resisted the effect of evil; for, by performing the duties of brotherhood to my sister, and seeking out her brother in the flesh, your soul has been prepared to receive with gladness this message of the Eternal: 'behold the multitude of your brethren.'"

"It is quite true that you and Mirah have been my teachers," said Deronda. "If this revelation had been made to me before I knew you both, I think my mind would have rebelled against it. Perhaps I should have felt then—'If I could have chosen, I would not have been a Jew.' What I feel now is—that my whole being is a consent to the fact. But it has been the gradual accord between your mind and mine which has brought about that full consent."

At the moment Deronda was speaking, that first evening in the book-shop was vividly in his remembrance, with all the struggling aloofness he had then felt from Mordecai's prophetic confidence. It was his nature to delight in satisfying to the utmost the eagerly-expectant soul, which seemed to be looking out from the face before him, like the long-enduring

watcher who at last sees the mounting signal-flame; and he went on with fuller fervour—

"It is through your inspiration that I have discerned what may be my life's task. It is you who have given shape to what, I believe, was an inherited yearning—the effect of brooding, passionate thoughts in many ancestors—thoughts that seem to have been intensely present in my grandfather. Suppose the stolen offspring of some mountain tribe brought up in a city of the plain, or one with an inherited genius for painting, and born blind—the ancestral life would lie within them as a dim longing for unknown objects and sensations, and the spell-bound habit of their inherited frames would be like a cunningly-wrought musical instrument, never played on, but quivering throughout in uneasy mysterious moanings of its intricate structure that, under the right touch, gives music. Something like that, I think, has been my experience. Since I began to read and know, I have always longed for some ideal task, in which I might feel myself the heart and brain of a multitude—some social captainship, which would come to me as a duty, and not be striven for as a personal prize. You have raised the image of such a task for me—to bind our race together in spite of heresy. You have said to me—'Our religion united us before it divided us—it made us a people before it made Rabbanites and Karaites.' I mean to try what can be done with that union—I mean to work in your spirit. Failure will not be ignoble, but it would be ignoble for me not to try."

"Even as my brother that fed at the breasts of

my mother," said Mordecai, falling back in his chair with a look of exultant repose, as after some finished labour.

To estimate the effect of this ardent outpouring from Deronda we must remember his former reserve, his careful avoidance of premature assent or delusive encouragement, which gave to this decided pledge of himself a sacramental solemnity, both for his own mind and Mordecai's. On Mirah the effect was equally strong, though with a difference: she felt a surprise which had no place in her brother's mind, at Deronda's suddenly revealed sense of nearness to them: there seemed to be a breaking of day around her which might show her other facts unlike her forebodings in the darkness. But after a moment's silence Mordecai spoke again:

"It has begun already—the marriage of our souls. It waits but the passing away of this body, and then they who are betrothed shall unite in a stricter bond, and what is mine shall be thine. Call nothing mine that I have written, Daniel; for though our Masters delivered rightly that everything should be quoted in the name of him that said it—and their rule is good —yet it does not exclude the willing marriage which melts soul into soul, and makes thought fuller as the clear waters are made fuller, where the fulness is inseparable and the clearness is inseparable. For I have judged what I have written, and I desire the body that I gave my thought to pass away as this fleshly body will pass; but let the thought be born again from our fuller soul which shall be called yours."

"You must not ask me to promise that," said Deronda, smiling. "I must be convinced first of special reasons for it in the writings themselves. And I am too backward a pupil yet. That blent transmission must go on without any choice of ours; but what we can't hinder must not make our rule for what we ought to choose. I think our duty is faithful tradition where we can attain it. And so you would insist for any one but yourself. Don't ask me to deny my spiritual parentage, when I am finding the clue of my life in the recognition of my natural parentage."

"I will ask for no promise till you see the reason," said Mordecai. "You have said the truth: I would obey the Masters' rule for another. But for years my hope, nay, my confidence, has been, not that the imperfect image of my thought, which is as the ill-shapen work of the youthful carver who has seen a heavenly pattern, and trembles in imitating the vision—not that this should live, but that my vision and passion should enter into yours—yea, into yours; for he whom I longed for afar, was he not you whom I discerned as mine when you came near? Nevertheless, you shall judge. For my soul is satisfied." Mordecai paused, and then began in a changed tone, reverting to previous suggestions from Deronda's disclosure: "What moved your parents——?" but he immediately checked himself, and added, "Nay, I ask not that you should tell me aught concerning others, unless it is your pleasure."

"Some time—gradually—you will know all," said Deronda. "But now tell me more about yourselves,

and how the time has passed since I went away. I am sure there has been some trouble. Mirah has been in distress about something."

He looked at Mirah, but she immediately turned to her brother, appealing to him to give the difficult answer. She hoped he would not think it necessary to tell Deronda the facts about her father on such an evening as this. Just when Deronda had brought himself so near, and identified himself with her brother, it was cutting to her that he should hear of this disgrace clinging about them, which seemed to have become partly his. To relieve herself she rose to take up her hat and cloak, thinking she would go to her own room: perhaps they would speak more easily when she had left them. But meanwhile Mordecai said—

"To-day there has been a grief. A duty which seemed to have gone far into the distance, has come back and turned its face upon us, and raised no gladness—has raised a dread that we must submit to. But for the moment we are delivered from any visible yoke. Let us defer speaking of it, as if this evening which is deepening about us were the beginning of the festival in which we must offer the first-fruits of our joy, and mingle no mourning with them."

Deronda divined the hinted grief, and left it in silence, rising as he saw Mirah rise, and saying to her, "Are you going? I must leave almost immediately—when I and Mrs Adam have mounted the precious chest, and I have delivered the key to Mordecai—no, Ezra,—may I call him Ezra now? I

have learned to think of him as Ezra since I have heard you call him so."

"Please call him Ezra," said Mirah, faintly, feeling a new timidity under Deronda's glance and near presence. Was there really something different about him, or was the difference only in her feeling? The strangely various emotions of the last few hours had exhausted her; she was faint with fatigue and want of food. Deronda, observing her pallor and tremulousness, longed to show more feeling, but dared not. She put out her hand with an effort to smile, and then he opened the door for her. That was all.

A man of refined pride shrinks from making a lover's approaches to a woman whose wealth or rank might make them appear presumptuous or low-motived; but Deronda was finding a more delicate difficulty in a position which, superficially taken, was the reverse of that—though to an ardent reverential love, the loved woman has always a kind of wealth and rank which makes a man keenly susceptible about the aspect of his addresses. Deronda's difficulty was what any generous man might have felt in some degree; but it affected him peculiarly through his imaginative sympathy with a mind in which gratitude was strong. Mirah, he knew, felt herself bound to him by deep obligations, which to her sensibilities might give every wish of his the aspect of a claim; and an inability to fulfil it would cause her a pain continually revived by their inevitable communion in care for Ezra. Here were fears not of pride only, but of extreme tenderness. Alto-

gether, to have the character of a benefactor seemed to Deronda's anxiety an insurmountable obstacle to confessing himself a lover, unless in some inconceivable way it could be revealed to him that Mirah's heart had accepted him beforehand. And the agitation on his own account, too, was not small.

Even a man who has practised himself in love-making till his own glibness has rendered him sceptical, may at last be overtaken by the lover's awe—may tremble, stammer, and show other signs of recovered sensibility no more in the range of his acquired talents than pins and needles after numbness: how much more may that energetic timidity possess a man whose inward history has cherished his susceptibilities instead of dulling them, and has kept all the language of passion fresh and rooted as the lovely leafage about the hillside spring!

As for Mirah her dear head lay on its pillow that night with its former suspicions thrown out of shape but still present, like an ugly story which has been discredited but not therefore dissipated. All that she was certain of about Deronda seemed to prove that he had no such fetters upon him as she had been allowing herself to believe in. His whole manner as well as his words implied that there were no hidden bonds remaining to have any effect in determining his future. But notwithstanding this plainly reasonable inference, uneasiness still clung about Mirah's heart. Deronda was not to blame, but he had an importance for Mrs Grandcourt which must give her some hold on him. And the thought of any close confidence between them stirred the

little biting snake that had long lain curled and harmless in Mirah's gentle bosom.

But did she this evening feel as completely as before that her jealousy was no less remote from any possibility for herself personally than if her human soul had been lodged in the body of a fawn that Deronda had saved from the archers? Hardly. Something indefinable had happened and made a difference. The soft warm rain of blossoms which had fallen just where she was—did it really come because she was there? What spirit was there among the boughs?

CHAPTER LXIV.

"Questa montagna è tale,
Che sempre al cominciar di sotto è grave,
E quanto uom più va su e men fa male."
—DANTE: *Il Purgatorio.*

IT was not many days after her mother's arrival that Gwendolen would consent to remain at Genoa. Her desire to get away from that gem of the sea, helped to rally her strength and courage. For what place, though it were the flowery vale of Enna, may not the inward sense turn into a circle of punishment where the flowers are no better than a crop of flame-tongues burning the soles of our feet?

"I shall never like to see the Mediterranean again," said Gwendolen to her mother, who thought that she quite understood her child's feeling—even in her tacit prohibition of any express reference to her late husband.

Mrs Davilow, indeed, though compelled formally to regard this time as one of severe calamity, was virtually enjoying her life more than she had ever done since her daughter's marriage. It seemed that her darling was brought back to her not merely with all the old affection, but with a conscious cherishing

of her mother's nearness, such as we give to a possession that we have been on the brink of losing.

"Are you there, mamma?" cried Gwendolen, in the middle of the night (a bed had been made for her mother in the same room with hers), very much as she would have done in her early girlhood, if she had felt frightened in lying awake.

"Yes, dear; can I do anything for you?"

"No, thank you; only I like so to know you are there. Do you mind my waking you?" (This question would hardly have been Gwendolen's in her early girlhood.)

"I was not asleep, darling."

"It seemed not real that you were with me. I wanted to make it real. I can bear things if you are with me. But you must not lie awake being anxious about me. You must be happy now. You must let me make you happy now at last—else what shall I do?"

"God bless you, dear; I have the best happiness I can have, when you make much of me."

But the next night, hearing that she was sighing and restless, Mrs Davilow said, "Let me give you your sleeping-draught, Gwendolen.'

"No, mamma, thank you; I don't want to sleep."

"It would be so good for you to sleep more, my darling."

"Don't say what would be good for me, mamma," Gwendolen answered, impetuously. "You don't know what would be good for me. You and my uncle must not contradict me and tell me anything is good for me when I feel it is not good."

Mrs Davilow was silent, not wondering that the poor child was irritable. Presently Gwendolen said—

"I was always naughty to you, mamma."

"No, dear, no."

"Yes, I was," said Gwendolen, insistently. "It is because I was always wicked that I am miserable now."

She burst into sobs and cries. The determination to be silent about all the facts of her married life and its close, reacted in these escapes of enigmatic excitement.

But dim lights of interpretation were breaking on the mother's mind through the information that came from Sir Hugo to Mr Gascoigne, and, with some omissions, from Mr Gascoigne to herself. The good-natured baronet, while he was attending to all decent measures in relation to his nephew's death, and the possible washing ashore of the body, thought it the kindest thing he could do to use his present friendly intercourse with the Rector as an opportunity for communicating to him, in the mildest way, the purport of Grandcourt's will, so as to save him the additional shock that would be in store for him if he carried his illusions all the way home. Perhaps Sir Hugo would have been communicable enough without that kind motive, but he really felt the motive. He broke the unpleasant news to the Rector by degrees: at first he only implied his fear that the widow was not so splendidly provided for as Mr Gascoigne, nay, as the baronet himself had expected; and only at last, after some previous vague reference to large claims on Grandcourt, he disclosed the

prior relations which, in the unfortunate absence of a legitimate heir, had determined all the splendour in another direction.

The Rector was deeply hurt, and remembered, more vividly than he had ever done before, how offensively proud and repelling the manners of the deceased had been towards him—remembered also that he himself, in that interesting period just before the arrival of the new occupant at Diplow, had received hints of former entangling dissipations, and an undue addiction to pleasure, though he had not foreseen that the pleasure which had probably, so to speak, been swept into private rubbish-heaps, would ever present itself as an array of live caterpillars, disastrous to the green meat of respectable people. But he did not make these retrospective thoughts audible to Sir Hugo, or lower himself by expressing any indignation on merely personal grounds, but behaved like a man of the world who had become a conscientious clergyman. His first remark was—

"When a young man makes his will in health, he usually counts on living a long while. Probably Mr Grandcourt did not believe that this will would ever have its present effect." After a moment, he added, "The effect is painful in more ways than one. Female morality is likely to suffer from this marked advantage and prominence being given to illegitimate offspring."

"Well, in point of fact," said Sir Hugo, in his comfortable way, "since the boy is there, this was really the best alternative for the disposal of the estates. Grandcourt had nobody nearer than his

cousin. And it's a chilling thought that you go out of this life only for the benefit of a cousin. A man gets a little pleasure in making his will, if it's for the good of his own curly heads; but it's a nuisance when you're giving and bequeathing to a used-up fellow like yourself, and one you don't care two straws for. It's the next worse thing to having only a life interest in your estates. No; I forgive Grandcourt for that part of his will. But, between ourselves, what I don't forgive him for, is the shabby way he has provided for your niece—*our* niece, I will say—no better a position than if she had been a doctor's widow. Nothing grates on me more than that posthumous grudgingness towards a wife. A man ought to have some pride and fondness for his widow. *I* should, I know. I take it as a test of a man, that he feels the easier about his death when he can think of his wife and daughters being comfortable after it. I like that story of the fellows in the Crimean war, who were ready to go to the bottom of the sea, if their widows were provided for."

"It has certainly taken me by surprise," said Mr Gascoigne, "all the more because, as the one who stood in the place of father to my niece, I had shown my reliance on Mr Grandcourt's apparent liberality in money matters by making no claims for her beforehand. That seemed to me due to him under the circumstances. Probably you think me blamable."

"Not blamable exactly. I respect a man for trusting another. But take my advice. If you marry another niece, though it may be to the Archbishop of Canterbury, bind him down. Your niece

can't be married for the first time twice over. And if he's a good fellow, he'll wish to be bound. But as to Mrs Grandcourt, I can only say that I feel my relation to her all the nearer because I think that she has not been well treated. And I hope you will urge her to rely on me as a friend."

Thus spake the chivalrous Sir Hugo, in his disgust at the young and beautiful widow of a Mallinger Grandcourt being left with only two thousand a-year and a house in a coal-mining district. To the Rector that income naturally appeared less shabby and less accompanied with mortifying privations; but in this conversation he had devoured a much keener sense than the baronet's of the humiliation cast over his niece, and also over her nearest friends, by the conspicuous publishing of her husband's relation to Mrs Glasher. And like all men who are good husbands and fathers, he felt the humiliation through the minds of the women who would be chiefly affected by it; so that the annoyance of first hearing the facts was far slighter than what he felt in communicating them to Mrs Davilow, and in anticipating Gwendolen's feeling whenever her mother saw fit to tell her of them. For the good Rector had an innocent conviction that his niece was unaware of Mrs Glasher's existence, arguing with masculine soundness from what maidens and wives were likely to know, do, and suffer, and having had a most imperfect observation of the particular maiden and wife in question. Not so Gwendolen's mother, who now thought that she saw an explanation of much that had been enigmatic in her child's

conduct and words before and after her engagement, concluding that in some inconceivable way Gwendolen had been informed of this left-handed marriage and the existence of the children. She trusted to opportunities that would arise in moments of affectionate confidence before and during their journey to England, when she might gradually learn how far the actual state of things was clear to Gwendolen, and prepare her for anything that might be a disappointment. But she was spared from devices on the subject.

"I hope you don't expect that I am going to be rich and grand, mamma," said Gwendolen, not long after the Rector's communication; "perhaps I shall have nothing at all."

She was drest, and had been sitting long in quiet meditation. Mrs Davilow was startled, but said, after a moment's reflection—

"Oh yes, dear, you will have something. Sir Hugo knows all about the will."

"That will not decide," said Gwendolen, abruptly.

"Surely, dear: Sir Hugo says you are to have two thousand a-year and the house at Gadsmere."

"What I have will depend on what I accept," said Gwendolen. "You and my uncle must not attempt to cross me and persuade me about this. I will do everything I can do to make you happy, but in anything about my husband I must not be interfered with. Is eight hundred a-year enough for you, mamma?"

"More than enough, dear. You must not think of giving me so much." Mrs Davilow paused a

little, and then said, "Do you know who is to have the estates and the rest of the money?"

"Yes," said Gwendolen, waving her hand in dismissal of the subject. "I know everything. It is all perfectly right, and I wish never to have it mentioned."

The mother was silent, looked away, and rose to fetch a fan-screen, with a slight flush on her delicate cheeks. Wondering, imagining, she did not like to meet her daughter's eyes, and sat down again under a sad constraint. What wretchedness her child had perhaps gone through, which yet must remain as it always had been, locked away from their mutual speech. But Gwendolen was watching her mother with that new divination which experience had given her; and in tender relenting at her own peremptoriness, she said, "Come and sit nearer to me, mamma, and don't be unhappy."

Mrs Davilow did as she was told, but bit her lips in the vain attempt to hinder smarting tears. Gwendolen leaned towards her caressingly and said, "I mean to be very wise; I do really. And good—oh so good to you, dear, old, sweet mamma, you won't know me. Only you must not cry."

The resolve that Gwendolen had in her mind was that she would ask Deronda whether she ought to accept any of her husband's money—whether she might accept what would enable her to provide for her mother. The poor thing felt strong enough to do anything that would give her a higher place in Deronda's mind.

An invitation that Sir Hugo pressed on her with

kind urgency was that she and Mrs Davilow should go straight with him to Park Lane, and make his house their abode as long as mourning and other details needed attending to in London. Town, he insisted, was just then the most retired of places; and he proposed to exert himself at once in getting all articles belonging to Gwendolen away from the house in Grosvenor Square. No proposal could have suited her better than this of staying a little while in Park Lane. It would be easy for her there to have an interview with Deronda, if she only knew how to get a letter into his hands, asking him to come to her. During the journey Sir Hugo, having understood that she was acquainted with the purport of her husband's will, ventured to talk before her and to her about her future arrangements, referring here and there to mildly agreeable prospects as matters of course, and otherwise shedding a decorous cheerfulness over her widowed position. It seemed to him really the more graceful course for a widow to recover her spirits on finding that her husband had not dealt as handsomely by her as he might have done; it was the testator's fault if he compromised all her grief at his departure by giving a testamentary reason for it, so that she might be supposed to look sad not because he had left her, but because he had left her poor. The baronet, having his kindliness doubly fanned by the favourable wind on his own fortunes and by compassion for Gwendolen, had become quite fatherly in his behaviour to her, called her "my dear," and in mentioning Gadsmere to Mr Gascoigne with its various advantages and disadvan-

tages, spoke of what "we" might do to make the best of that property. Gwendolen sat by in pale silence while Sir Hugo, with his face turned towards Mrs Davilow or Mr Gascoigne, conjectured that Mrs Grandcourt might perhaps prefer letting Gadsmere to residing there during any part of the year, in which case he thought that it might be leased on capital terms to one of the fellows engaged with the coal: Sir Hugo had seen enough of the place to know that it was as comfortable and picturesque a box as any man need desire, providing his desires were circumscribed within a coal area.

"*I* shouldn't mind about the soot myself," said the baronet, with that dispassionateness which belongs to the potential mood. "Nothing is more healthy. And if one's business lay there, Gadsmere would be a paradise. It makes quite a feature in Scrogg's history of the county, with the little tower and the fine piece of water—the prettiest print in the book."

"A more important place than Offendene, I suppose?" said Mr Gascoigne.

"Much," said the baronet, decisively. "I was there with my poor brother—it is more than a quarter of a century ago, but I remember it very well. The rooms may not be larger, but the grounds are on a different scale."

"Our poor dear Offendene is empty after all," said Mrs Davilow. "When it came to the point, Mr Haynes declared off, and there has been no one to take it since. I might as well have accepted Lord Brackenshaw's kind offer that I should remain in it

another year rent-free: for I should have kept the place aired and warmed."

"I hope you have got something snug instead," said Sir Hugo.

"A little too snug," said Mr Gascoigne, smiling at his sister-in-law. "You are rather thick upon the ground."

Gwendolen had turned with a changed glance when her mother spoke of Offendene being empty. This conversation passed during one of the long unaccountable pauses often experienced in foreign trains at some country station. There was a dreamy, sunny stillness over the hedgeless fields stretching to the boundary of poplars; and to Gwendolen the talk within the carriage seemed only to make the dreamland larger with an indistinct region of coal-pits, and a purgatorial Gadsmere which she would never visit; till, at her mother's words, this mingled, dozing view seemed to dissolve and give way to a more wakeful vision of Offendene and Pennicote under their cooler lights. She saw the grey shoulders of the downs, the cattle-specked fields, the shadowy plantations with rutted lanes where the barked timber lay for a wayside seat, the neatly-clipped hedges on the road from the parsonage to Offendene, the avenue where she was gradually discerned from the windows, the hall-door opening, and her mother or one of the troublesome sisters coming out to meet her. All that brief experience of a quiet home which had once seemed a dulness to be fled from, now came back to her as a restful escape, a station where she found the breath

of morning and the unreproaching voice of birds, after following a lure through a long Satanic masquerade, which she had entered on with an intoxicated belief in its disguises, and had seen the end of in shrieking fear lest she herself had become one of the evil spirits who were dropping their human mummery and hissing around her with serpent tongues.

In this way Gwendolen's mind paused over Offendene and made it the scene of many thoughts; but she gave no further outward sign of interest in this conversation, any more than in Sir Hugo's opinion on the telegraphic cable or her uncle's views of the Church Rate Abolition Bill. What subjects will not our talk embrace in leisurely day-journeying from Genoa to London? Even strangers, after glancing from China to Peru and opening their mental stores with a liberality threatening a mutual impression of poverty on any future meeting, are liable to become excessively confidential. But the baronet and the Rector were under a still stronger pressure towards cheerful communication: they were like acquaintances compelled to a long drive in a mourning-coach, who having first remarked that the occasion is a melancholy one, naturally proceed to enliven it by the most miscellaneous discourse. "I don't mind telling *you*," said Sir Hugo to the Rector, in mentioning some private detail; while the Rector, without saying so, did not mind telling the baronet about his sons, and the difficulty of placing them in the world. By dint of discussing all persons and things within driving-reach of Diplow, Sir Hugo got himself

wrought to a pitch of interest in that former home, and of conviction that it was his pleasant duty to regain and strengthen his personal influence in the neighbourhood, that made him declare his intention of taking his family to the place for a month or two before the autumn was over; and Mr Gascoigne cordially rejoiced in that prospect. Altogether, the journey was continued and ended with mutual liking between the male fellow-travellers.

Meanwhile Gwendolen sat by like one who had visited the spirit-world and was full to the lips of an unutterable experience that threw a strange unreality over all the talk she was hearing of her own and the world's business; and Mrs Davilow was chiefly occupied in imagining what her daughter was feeling, and in wondering what was signified by her hinted doubt whether she would accept her husband's bequest. Gwendolen in fact had before her the unscaled wall of an immediate purpose shutting off every other resolution. How to scale the wall? She wanted again to see and consult Deronda, that she might secure herself against any act he would disapprove. Would her remorse have maintained its power within her, or would she have felt absolved by secrecy, if it had not been for that outer conscience which was made for her by Deronda? It is hard to say how much we could forgive ourselves if we were secure from judgment by another whose opinion is the breathing-medium of all our joy—who brings to us with close pressure and immediate sequence that judgment of the Invisible and Universal which self-flattery and the

world's tolerance would easily melt and disperse. In this way our brother may be in the stead of God to us, and his opinion which has pierced even to the joints and marrow, may be our virtue in the making. That mission of Deronda to Gwendolen had begun with what she had felt to be his judgment of her at the gaming-table. He might easily have spoiled it:—much of our lives is spent in marring our own influence and turning others' belief in us into a widely concluding unbelief which they call knowledge of the world, while it is really disappointment in you or me. Deronda had not spoiled his mission.

But Gwendolen had forgotten to ask him for his address in case she wanted to write, and her only way of reaching him was through Sir Hugo. She was not in the least blind to the construction that all witnesses might put on her giving signs of dependence on Deronda, and her seeking him more than he sought her: Grandcourt's rebukes had sufficiently enlightened her pride. But the force, the tenacity of her nature had thrown itself into that dependence, and she would no more let go her hold on Deronda's help, or deny herself the interview her soul needed, because of witnesses, than if she had been in prison in danger of being condemned to death. When she was in Park Lane and knew that the baronet would be going down to the Abbey immediately (just to see his family for a couple of days and then return to transact needful business for Gwendolen), she said to him without any air of hesitation, while her mother was present—

"Sir Hugo, I wish to see Mr Deronda again as soon as possible. I don't know his address. Will you tell it me, or let him know that I want to see him?"

A quick thought passed across Sir Hugo's face, but made no difference to the ease with which he said, "Upon my word, I don't know whether he's at his chambers or the Abbey at this moment. But I'll make sure of him. I'll send a note now to his chambers telling him to come, and if he's at the Abbey I can give him your message and send him up at once. I am sure he will want to obey your wish," the baronet ended, with grave kindness, as if nothing could seem to him more in the appropriate course of things than that she should send such a message.

But he was convinced that Gwendolen had a passionate attachment to Deronda, the seeds of which had been laid long ago, and his former suspicion now recurred to him with more strength than ever, that her feeling was likely to lead her into imprudences — in which kind-hearted Sir Hugo was determined to screen and defend her as far as lay in his power. To him it was as pretty a story as need be that this fine creature and his favourite Dan should have turned out to be formed for each other, and that the unsuitable husband should have made his exit in such excellent time. Sir Hugo liked that a charming woman should be made as happy as possible. In truth, what most vexed his mind in this matter at present was a doubt whether the too lofty and inscrutable Dan had not got some

scheme or other in his head, which would prove to be dearer to him than the lovely Mrs Grandcourt, and put that neatly-prepared marriage with her out of the question. It was among the usual paradoxes of feeling that Sir Hugo, who had given his fatherly cautions to Deronda against too much tenderness in his relations with the bride, should now feel rather irritated against him by the suspicion that he had not fallen in love as he ought to have done. Of course all this thinking on Sir Hugo's part was eminently premature, only a fortnight or so after Grandcourt's death. But it is the trick of thinking to be either premature or behindhand.

However, he sent the note to Deronda's chambers, and it found him there.

CHAPTER LXV.

"O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings!"
—MILTON.

DERONDA did not obey Gwendolen's new summons without some agitation. Not his vanity, but his keen sympathy made him susceptible to the danger that another's heart might feel larger demands on him than he would be able to fulfil; and it was no longer a matter of argument with him, but of penetrating consciousness, that Gwendolen's soul clung to his with a passionate need. We do not argue the existence of the anger or the scorn that thrills through us in a voice; we simply feel it, and it admits of no disproof. Deronda felt this woman's destiny hanging on his over a precipice of despair. Any one who knows him cannot wonder at his inward confession, that if all this had happened little more than a year ago, he would hardly have asked himself whether he loved her: the impetuous determining impulse which would have moved him would have been to save her from sorrow, to shelter her life for evermore from the dangers of loneliness, and carry out to the last the rescue he had begun

in that monitory redemption of the necklace. But now, love and duty had thrown other bonds around him, and that impulse could no longer determine his life; still, it was present in him as a compassionate yearning, a painful quivering at the very imagination of having again and again to meet the appeal of her eyes and words. The very strength of the bond, the certainty of the resolve, that kept him asunder from her, made him gaze at her lot apart with the more aching pity.

He awaited her coming in the back drawing-room —part of that white and crimson space where they had sat together at the musical party, where Gwendolen had said for the first time that her lot depended on his not forsaking her, and her appeal had seemed to melt into the melodic cry—*Per pietà non dirmi addio.* But the melody had come from Mirah's dear voice.

Deronda walked about this room, which he had for years known by heart, with a strange sense of metamorphosis in his own life. The familiar objects around him, from Lady Mallinger's gently smiling portrait to the also human and urbane faces of the lions on the pilasters of the chimney-piece, seemed almost to belong to a previous state of existence which he was revisiting in memory only, not in reality; so deep and transforming had been the impressions he had lately experienced, so new were the conditions under which he found himself in the house he had been accustomed to think of as a home — standing with his hat in his hand awaiting the entrance of a young creature whose life had

also been undergoing a transformation — a tragic transformation towards a wavering result, in which he felt with apprehensiveness that his own action was still bound up.

But Gwendolen was come in, looking changed, not only by her mourning dress, but by a more satisfied quietude of expression than he had seen in her face at Genoa. Her satisfaction was that Deronda was there; but there was no smile between them as they met and clasped hands: each was full of remembrances — full of anxious prevision. She said, "It was good of you to come. Let us sit down," immediately seating herself in the nearest chair. He placed himself opposite to her.

"I asked you to come because I want you to tell me what I ought to do," she began, at once. "Don't be afraid of telling me what you think is right, because it seems hard. I have made up my mind to do it. I was afraid once of being poor; I could not bear to think of being under other people; and that was why I did something—why I married. I have borne worse things now. I think I could bear to be poor, if you think I ought. Do you know about my husband's will?"

"Yes, Sir Hugo told me," said Deronda, already guessing the question she had to ask.

"Ought I to take anything he has left me? I will tell you what I have been thinking," said Gwendolen, with a more nervous eagerness. "Perhaps you may not quite know that I really did think a good deal about my mother when I married. *I was* selfish, but I did love her, and feel about her

poverty; and what comforted me most at first, when I was miserable, was her being better off because I had married. The thing that would be hardest to me now would be to see her in poverty again; and I have been thinking that if I took enough to provide for her, and no more—nothing for myself—it would not be wrong; for I was very precious to my mother—and he took me from her—and he meant—and if she had known——"

Gwendolen broke off. She had been preparing herself for this interview by thinking of hardly anything else than this question of right towards her mother; but the question had carried with it thoughts and reasons which it was impossible for her to utter, and these perilous remembrances swarmed between her words, making her speech more and more agitated and tremulous. She looked down helplessly at her hands, now unladen of all rings except her wedding-ring.

"Do not hurt yourself by speaking of that," said Deronda, tenderly. "There is no need; the case is very simple. I think I can hardly judge wrongly about it. You consult me because I am the only person to whom you have confided the most painful part of your experience; and I can understand your scruples." He did not go on immediately, waiting for her to recover herself. The silence seemed to Gwendolen full of the tenderness that she heard in his voice, and she had courage to lift up her eyes and look at him as he said, "You are conscious of something which you feel to be a crime towards one who is dead. You think that you have for-

feited all claim as a wife. You shrink from taking what was his. You want to keep yourself pure from profiting by his death. Your feeling even urges you to some self-punishment—some scourging of the self that disobeyed your better will—the will that struggled against temptation. I have known something of that myself. Do I understand you?"

"Yes—at least, I want to be good—not like what I have been," said Gwendolen. "I will try to bear what you think I ought to bear. I have tried to tell you the worst about myself. What ought I to do?"

"If no one but yourself were concerned in this question of income," said Deronda, "I should hardly dare to urge you against any remorseful prompting; but I take as a guide now your feeling about Mrs Davilow, which seems to me quite just. I cannot think that your husband's dues even to yourself are nullified by any act you have committed. He voluntarily entered into your life, and affected its course in what is always the most momentous way. But setting that aside, it was due from him in his position that he should provide for your mother, and he of course understood that if this will took effect she would share the provision he had made for you."

"She has had eight hundred a-year. What I thought of was to take that and leave the rest," said Gwendolen. She had been so long inwardly arguing for this as a permission, that her mind could not at once take another attitude.

"I think it is not your duty to fix a limit in that

way," said Deronda. "You would be making a painful enigma for Mrs Davilow; an income from which you shut yourself out must be embittered to her. And your own course would become too difficult. We agreed at Genoa that the burthen on your conscience is what no one ought to be admitted to the knowledge of. The future beneficence of your life will be best furthered by your saving all others from the pain of that knowledge. In my opinion you ought simply to abide by the provisions of your husband's will, and let your remorse tell only on the use that you will make of your monetary independence."

In uttering the last sentence Deronda automatically took up his hat, which he had laid on the floor beside him. Gwendolen, sensitive to his slightest movement, felt her heart giving a great leap, as if it too had a consciousness of its own, and would hinder him from going: in the same moment she rose from her chair, unable to reflect that the movement was an acceptance of his apparent intention to leave her; and Deronda of course also rose, advancing a little.

"I will do what you tell me," said Gwendolen, hurriedly; "but what else shall I do?" No other than these simple words were possible to her; and even these were too much for her in a state of emotion where her proud secrecy was disenthroned: as the childlike sentences fell from her lips they reacted on her like a picture of her own helplessness, and she could not check the sob which sent the large tears to her eyes. Deronda, too, felt a

crushing pain; but imminent consequences were visible to him, and urged him to the utmost exertion of conscience. When she had pressed her tears away, he said, in a gently questioning tone—

"You will probably be soon going with Mrs Davilow into the country?"

"Yes, in a week or ten days." Gwendolen waited an instant, turning her eyes vaguely towards the window, as if looking at some imagined prospect. "I want to be kind to them all — they can be happier than I can. Is that the best I can do?"

"I think so. It is a duty that cannot be doubtful," said Deronda. He paused a little between his sentences, feeling a weight of anxiety on all his words. "Other duties will spring from it. Looking at your life as a debt may seem the dreariest view of things at a distance; but it cannot really be so. What makes life dreary is the want of motive; but once beginning to act with that penitential, loving purpose you have in your mind, there will be unexpected satisfactions—there will be newly-opening needs—continually coming to carry you on from day to day. You will find your life growing like a plant."

Gwendolen turned her eyes on him with the look of one athirst towards the sound of unseen waters. Deronda felt the look as if she had been stretching her arms towards him from a forsaken shore. His voice took an affectionate imploringness when he said—

"This sorrow, which has cut down to the root, has come to you while you are so young—try to think of it, not as a spoiling of your life, but as a

preparation for it. Let it be a preparation——" Any one overhearing his tones would have thought he was entreating for his own happiness. "See! you have been saved from the worst evils that might have come from your marriage, which you feel was wrong. You have had a vision of injurious, selfish action—a vision of possible degradation; think that a severe angel, seeing you along the road of error, grasped you by the wrist, and showed you the horror of the life you must avoid. And it has come to you in your spring-time. Think of it as a preparation. You can, you will, be among the best of women, such as make others glad that they were born."

The words were like the touch of a miraculous hand to Gwendolen. Mingled emotions streamed through her frame with a strength that seemed the beginning of a new existence, having some new powers or other which stirred in her vaguely. So pregnant is the divine hope of moral recovery with the energy that fulfils it. So potent in us is the infused action of another soul, before which we bow in complete love. But the new existence seemed inseparable from Deronda: the hope seemed to make his presence permanent. It was not her thought, that he loved her and would cling to her —a thought would have tottered with improbability; it was her spiritual breath. For the first time since that terrible moment on the sea a flush rose and spread over her cheek, brow, and neck, deepened an instant or two, and then gradually disappeared. She did not speak.

Deronda advanced and put out his hand, saying, "I must not weary you."

She was startled by the sense that he was going, and put her hand in his, still without speaking.

"You look ill yet — unlike yourself," he added, while he held her hand.

"I can't sleep much," she answered, with some return of her dispirited manner. "Things repeat themselves in me so. They come back—they will all come back," she ended, shudderingly, a chill fear threatening her.

"By degrees they will be less insistent," said Deronda. He could not drop her hand or move away from her abruptly.

"Sir Hugo says he shall come to stay at Diplow," said Gwendolen, snatching at previously intended words which had slipped away from her. "You will come too."

"Probably," said Deronda, and then feeling that the word was cold, he added, correctively, "Yes, I shall come," and then released her hand, with the final friendly pressure of one who has virtually said good-bye.

"And not again here, before I leave town?" said Gwendolen, with timid sadness, looking as pallid as ever.

What could Deronda say? "If I can be of any use—if you wish me—certainly I will."

"I must wish it," said Gwendolen, impetuously; "you know I must wish it. What strength have I? Who else is there?" Again a sob was rising.

Deronda felt a pang, which showed itself in his

face. He looked miserable as he said, "I will certainly come."

Gwendolen perceived the change in his face; but the intense relief of expecting him to come again could not give way to any other feeling, and there was a recovery of the inspired hope and courage in her.

"Don't be unhappy about me," she said, in a tone of affectionate assurance. "I shall remember your words—every one of them. I shall remember what you believe about me; I shall try."

She looked at him firmly, and put out her hand again as if she had forgotten what had passed since those words of his which she promised to remember. But there was no approach to a smile on her lips. She had never smiled since her husband's death. When she stood still and in silence, she looked like a melancholy statue of the Gwendolen whose laughter had once been so ready when others were grave.

It is only by remembering the searching anguish which had changed the aspect of the world for her that we can understand her behaviour to Deronda —the unreflecting openness, nay, the importunate pleading, with which she expressed her dependence on him. Considerations such as would have filled the minds of indifferent spectators could not occur to her, any more than if flames had been mounting around her, and she had flung herself into his opened arms and clung about his neck that he might carry her into safety. She identified him with the struggling regenerative process in her which had begun with his action. Is it any

wonder that she saw her own necessity reflected in his feeling? She was in that state of unconscious reliance and expectation which is a common experience with us when we are preoccupied with our own trouble or our own purposes. We diffuse our feeling over others, and count on their acting from our motives. Her imagination had not been turned to a future union with Deronda by any other than the spiritual tie which had been continually strengthening; but also it had not been turned towards a future separation from him. Love-making and marriage—how could they now be the imagery in which poor Gwendolen's deepest attachment could spontaneously clothe itself? Mighty Love had laid his hand upon her; but what had he demanded of her? Acceptance of rebuke—the hard task of self-change—confession—endurance. If she cried towards him, what then? She cried as the child cries whose little feet have fallen backward—cried to be taken by the hand, lest she should lose herself.

The cry pierced Deronda. What position could have been more difficult for a man full of tenderness, yet with clear foresight? He was the only creature who knew the real nature of Gwendolen's trouble: to withdraw himself from any appeal of hers would be to consign her to a dangerous loneliness. He could not reconcile himself to the cruelty of apparently rejecting her dependence on him; and yet in the nearer or farther distance he saw a coming wrench, which all present strengthening of their bond would make the harder.

He was obliged to risk that. He went once and

again to Park Lane before Gwendolen left; but their interviews were in the presence of Mrs Davilow, and were therefore less agitating. Gwendolen, since she had determined to accept her income, had conceived a project which she liked to speak of: it was, to place her mother and sisters with herself in Offendene again, and, as she said, piece back her life on to that time when they first went there, and when everything was happiness about her, only she did not know it. The idea had been mentioned to Sir Hugo, who was going to exert himself about the letting of Gadsmere for a rent which would more than pay the rent of Offendene. All this was told to Deronda, who willingly dwelt on a subject that seemed to give some soothing occupation to Gwendolen. He said nothing, and she asked nothing, of what chiefly occupied himself. Her mind was fixed on his coming to Diplow before the autumn was over; and she no more thought of the Lapidoths—the little Jewess and her brother—as likely to make a difference in her destiny, than of the fermenting political and social leaven which was making a difference in the history of the world. In fact, poor Gwendolen's memory had been stunned, and all outside the lava-lit track of her troubled conscience, and her effort to get deliverance from it, lay for her in dim forgetfulness.

CHAPTER LXVI.

"One day still fierce 'mid many a day struck calm."
—BROWNING: *The Ring and the Book.*

MEANWHILE Ezra and Mirah, whom Gwendolen did not include in her thinking about Deronda, were having their relation to him drawn closer and brought into fuller light.

The father Lapidoth had quitted his daughter at the doorstep, ruled by that possibility of staking something in play or betting which presented itself with the handling of any sum beyond the price of staying actual hunger, and left no care for alternative prospects or resolutions. Until he had lost everything he never considered whether he would apply to Mirah again or whether he would brave his son's presence. In the first moment he had shrunk from encountering Ezra as he would have shrunk from any other situation of disagreeable constraint; and the possession of Mirah's purse was enough to banish the thought of future necessities. The gambling appetite is more absolutely dominant than bodily hunger, which can be neutralised by an emotional or intellectual excitation; but the passion for watch-

ing chances—the habitual suspensive poise of the mind in actual or imaginary play—nullifies the susceptibility to other excitation. In its final, imperious stage, it seems the unjoyous dissipation of demons, seeking diversion on the burning marl of perdition.

But every form of selfishness, however abstract and unhuman, requires the support of at least one meal a-day; and though Lapidoth's appetite for food and drink was extremely moderate, he had slipped into a shabby, unfriended form of life in which the appetite could not be satisfied without some ready money. When, in a brief visit at a house which announced "Pyramids" on the window-blind, he had first doubled and trebled and finally lost Mirah's thirty shillings, he went out with her empty purse in his pocket, already balancing in his mind whether he should get another immediate stake by pawning the purse, or whether he should go back to her giving himself a good countenance by restoring the purse, and declaring that he had used the money in paying a score that was standing against him. Besides, among the sensibilities still left strong in Lapidoth was the sensibility to his own claims, and he appeared to himself to have a claim on any property his children might possess, which was stronger than the justice of his son's resentment. After all, to take up his lodging with his children was the best thing he could do; and the more he thought of meeting Ezra the less he winced from it, his imagination being more wrought on by the chances of his getting something into his pocket with safety and without exertion, than by the threat of a private

humiliation. Luck had been against him lately; he expected it to turn—and might not the turn begin with some opening of supplies which would present itself through his daughter's affairs and the good friends she had spoken of? Lapidoth counted on the fascination of his cleverness—an old habit of mind which early experience had sanctioned; and it is not only women who are unaware of their diminished charm, or imagine that they can feign not to be worn out.

The result of Lapidoth's rapid balancing was that he went towards the little square in Brompton with the hope that, by walking about and watching, he might catch sight of Mirah going out or returning, in which case his entrance into the house would be made easier. But it was already evening—the evening of the day next to that on which he had first seen her; and after a little waiting, weariness made him reflect that he might ring, and if she were not at home, he might ask the time at which she was expected. But on coming near the house he knew that she was at home: he heard her singing.

Mirah, seated at the piano, was pouring forth "*Herz, mein Herz,*" while Ezra was listening with his eyes shut, when Mrs Adam opened the door, and said in some embarrassment—

"A gentleman below says he is your father, miss."

"I will go down to him," said Mirah, starting up immediately and looking towards her brother.

"No, Mirah, not so," said Ezra, with decision. "Let him come up, Mrs Adam."

Mirah stood with her hands pinching each other,

and feeling sick with anxiety, while she continued looking at Ezra, who had also risen, and was evidently much shaken. But there was an expression in his face which she had never seen before; his brow was knit, his lips seemed hardened with the same severity that gleamed from his eyes.

When Mrs Adam opened the door to let in the father, she could not help casting a look at the group, and after glancing from the younger man to the elder, said to herself as she closed the door, "Father, sure enough." The likeness was that of outline, which is always most striking at the first moment; the expression had been wrought into the strongest contrast by such hidden or inconspicuous differences as can make the genius of a Cromwell within the outward type of a father who was no more than a respectable parishioner.

Lapidoth had put on a melancholy expression beforehand, but there was some real wincing in his frame as he said—

"Well, Ezra, my boy, you hardly know me after so many years."

"I know you—too well—father," said Ezra, with a slow biting solemnity which made the word father a reproach.

"Ah, you are not pleased with me. I don't wonder at it. Appearances have been against me. When a man gets into straits he can't do just as he would by himself or anybody else. *I've* suffered enough, I know," said Lapidoth, quickly. In speaking he always recovered some glibness and hardihood; and now turning towards Mirah, he held out

her purse, saying, "Here's your little purse, my dear. I thought you'd be anxious about it because of that bit of writing. I've emptied it, you'll see, for I had a score to pay for food and lodging. I knew you would like me to clear myself, and here I stand—without a single farthing in my pocket—at the mercy of my children. You can turn me out if you like, without getting a policeman. Say the word, Mirah; say, 'Father, I've had enough of you; you made a pet of me, and spent your all on me, when I couldn't have done without you; but I can do better without you now,'—say that, and I'm gone out like a spark. I shan't spoil your pleasure again." The tears were in his voice as usual, before he had finished.

"You know I could never say it, father," answered Mirah, with not the less anguish because she felt the falsity of everything in his speech except the implied wish to remain in the house.

"Mirah, my sister, leave us!" said Ezra, in a tone of authority.

She looked at her brother falteringly, beseechingly—in awe of his decision, yet unable to go without making a plea for this father who was like something that had grown in her flesh with pain, but that she could never have cut away without worse pain. She went close to her brother, and putting her hand in his, said, in a low voice, but not so low as to be unheard by Lapidoth, "Remember, Ezra—you said my mother would not have shut him out."

"Trust me, and go," said Ezra.

She left the room, but after going a few steps up

the stairs, sat down with a palpitating heart. If, because of anything her brother said to him, he went away——

Lapidoth had some sense of what was being prepared for him in his son's mind, but he was beginning to adjust himself to the situation and find a point of view that would give him a cool superiority to any attempt at humiliating him. This haggard son, speaking as from a sepulchre, had the incongruity which selfish levity learns to see in suffering and death, until the unrelenting pincers of disease clutch its own flesh. Whatever preaching he might deliver must be taken for a matter of course, as a man finding shelter from hail in an open cathedral might take a little religious howling that happened to be going on there.

Lapidoth was not born with this sort of callousness: he had achieved it.

"This home that we have here," Ezra began, "is maintained partly by the generosity of a beloved friend who supports me, and partly by the labours of my sister, who supports herself. While we have a home we will not shut you out from it. We will not cast you out to the mercy of your vices. For you are our father, and though you have broken your bond, we acknowledge ours. But I will never trust you. You absconded with money, leaving your debts unpaid; you forsook my mother; you robbed her of her little child and broke her heart; you have become a gambler, and where shame and conscience were, there sits an insatiable desire; you were ready to sell my sister—you had sold her, but the price

was denied you. The man who has done these things must never expect to be trusted any more. We will share our food with you—you shall have a bed, and clothing. We will do this duty to you, because you are our father. But you will never be trusted. You are an evil man: you made the misery of our mother. That such a man is our father is a brand on our flesh which will not cease smarting. But the Eternal has laid it upon us; and though human justice were to flog you for crimes, and your body fell helpless before the public scorn—we would still say, 'This is our father; make way, that we may carry him out of your sight.'"

Lapidoth, in adjusting himself to what was coming, had not been able to foresee the exact intensity of the lightning or the exact course it would take—that it would not fall outside his frame but through it. He could not foresee what was so new to him as this voice from the soul of his son. It touched that spring of hysterical excitability which Mirah used to witness in him when he sat at home and sobbed. As Ezra ended, Lapidoth threw himself into a chair and cried like a woman, burying his face against the table—and yet, strangely, while this hysterical crying was an inevitable reaction in him under the stress of his son's words, it was also a conscious resource in a difficulty; just as in early life, when he was a bright-faced curly young man, he had been used to avail himself of this subtly-poised physical susceptibility to turn the edge of resentment or disapprobation.

Ezra sat down again and said nothing—exhausted

by the shock of his own irrepressible utterance, the outburst of feelings which for years he had borne in solitude and silence. His thin hands trembled on the arms of the chair; he would hardly have found voice to answer a question; he felt as if he had taken a step towards beckoning Death. Meanwhile Mirah's quick expectant ear detected a sound which her heart recognised: she could not stay out of the room any longer. But on opening the door her immediate alarm was for Ezra, and it was to his side that she went, taking his trembling hand in hers, which he pressed and found support in; but he did not speak, or even look at her. The father with his face buried was conscious that Mirah had entered, and presently lifted up his head, pressed his handkerchief against his eyes, put out his hand towards her, and said with plaintive hoarseness, "Good-bye, Mirah; your father will not trouble you again. He deserves to die like a dog by the roadside, and he will. If your mother had lived, she would have forgiven me—thirty-four years ago I put the ring on her finger under the *Chuppa*, and we were made one. She would have forgiven me, and we should have spent our old age together. But I haven't deserved it. Good-bye."

He rose from the chair as he said the last "good-bye." Mirah had put her hand in his and held him. She was not tearful and grieving, but frightened and awe-struck, as she cried out—

"No, father, no!" Then turning to her brother, "Ezra, you have not forbidden him?—Stay, father, and leave off wrong things. Ezra, I cannot bear it. How can I say to my father, 'Go and die!'"

"I have not said it," Ezra answered, with great effort. "I have said, stay and be sheltered."

"Then you will stay, father—and be taken care of—and come with me," said Mirah, drawing him towards the door.

This was really what Lapidoth wanted. And for the moment he felt a sort of comfort in recovering his daughter's dutiful tendance, that made a change of habits seem possible to him. She led him down to the parlour below, and said—

"This is my sitting-room when I am not with Ezra, and there is a bedroom behind which shall be yours. You will stay and be good, father. Think that you are come back to my mother, and that she has forgiven you — she speaks to you through me." Mirah's tones were imploring, but she could not give one of her former caresses.

Lapidoth quickly recovered his composure, began to speak to Mirah of the improvement in her voice, and other easy subjects, and when Mrs Adam came to lay out his supper, entered into converse with her in order to show her that he was not a common person, though his clothes were just now against him.

But in his usual wakefulness at night, he fell to wondering what money Mirah had by her, and went back over old Continental hours at *Roulette*, reproducing the method of his play, and the chances that had frustrated it. He had had his reasons for coming to England, but for most things it was a cursed country.

These were the stronger visions of the night with

Lapidoth, and not the worn frame of his ireful son uttering a terrible judgment. Ezra did pass across the gaming-table, and his words were audible; but he passed like an insubstantial ghost, and his words had the heart eaten out of them by numbers and movements that seemed to make the very tissue of Lapidoth's consciousness.

CHAPTER LXVII.

The godhead in us wrings our nobler deeds
From our reluctant selves.

It was an unpleasant surprise to Deronda when he returned from the Abbey to find the undesirable father installed in the lodgings at Brompton. Mirah had felt it necessary to speak of Deronda to her father, and even to make him as fully aware as she could of the way in which the friendship with Ezra had begun, and of the sympathy which had cemented it. She passed more lightly over what Deronda had done for her, omitting altogether the rescue from drowning, and speaking of the shelter she had found in Mrs Meyrick's family so as to leave her father to suppose that it was through these friends Deronda had become acquainted with her. She could not persuade herself to more completeness in her narrative: she could not let the breath of her father's soul pass over her relation to Deronda. And Lapidoth, for reasons, was not eager in his questioning about the circumstances of her flight and arrival in England. But he was

much interested in the fact of his children having a beneficent friend apparently high in the world.

It was the brother who told Deronda of this new condition added to their life. "I am become calm in beholding him now," Ezra ended, "and I try to think it possible that my sister's tenderness, and the daily tasting a life of peace, may win him to remain aloof from temptation. I have enjoined her, and she has promised, to trust him with no money. I have convinced her that he will buy with it his own destruction."

Deronda first came on the third day from Lapidoth's arrival. The new clothes for which he had been measured were not yet ready, and wishing to make a favourable impression he did not choose to present himself in the old ones. He watched for Deronda's departure, and getting a view of him from the window was rather surprised at his youthfulness, which Mirah had not mentioned, and which he had somehow thought out of the question in a personage who had taken up a grave friendship and hoary studies with the sepulchral Ezra. Lapidoth began to imagine that Deronda's real or chief motive must be that he was in love with Mirah. And so much the better; for a tie to Mirah had more promise of indulgence for her father than the tie to Ezra; and Lapidoth was not without the hope of recommending himself to Deronda, and of softening any hard prepossessions. He was behaving with much amiability, and trying in all ways at his command to get himself into easy domestication with his children—en-

tering into Mirah's music, showing himself docile about smoking, which Mrs Adam could not tolerate in her parlour, and walking out in the square with his German pipe and the tobacco with which Mirah supplied him. He was too acute to venture any present remonstrance against the refusal of money, which Mirah told him that she must persist in as a solemn duty promised to her brother. He was comfortable enough to wait.

The next time Deronda came, Lapidoth, equipped in his new clothes and satisfied with his own appearance, was in the room with Ezra, who was teaching himself, as part of his severe duty, to tolerate his father's presence whenever it was imposed. Deronda was cold and distant, the first sight of this man, who had blighted the lives of his wife and children, creating in him a repulsion that was even a physical discomfort. But Lapidoth did not let himself be discouraged, asked leave to stay and hear the reading of papers from the old chest, and actually made himself useful in helping to decipher some difficult German manuscript. This led him to suggest that it might be desirable to make a transcription of the manuscript, and he offered his services for this purpose, and also to make copies of any papers in Roman characters. Though Ezra's young eyes, he observed, were getting weak, his own were still strong. Deronda accepted the offer, thinking that Lapidoth showed a sign of grace in the willingness to be employed usefully; and he saw a gratified expression in Ezra's face, who, however, presently said, "Let

all the writing be done here; for I cannot trust the papers out of my sight, lest there be an accident by burning or otherwise." Poor Ezra felt very much as if he had a convict on leave under his charge. Unless he saw his father working, it was not possible to believe that he would work in good faith. But by this arrangement he fastened on himself the burthen of his father's presence, which was made painful not only through his deepest, longest associations, but also through Lapidoth's restlessness of temperament, which showed itself the more as he became familiarised with his situation, and lost any awe he had felt of his son. The fact was, he was putting a strong constraint on himself in confining his attention for the sake of winning Deronda's favour; and like a man in an uncomfortable garment he gave himself relief at every opportunity, going out to smoke, or moving about and talking, or throwing himself back in his chair and remaining silent, but incessantly carrying on a dumb language of facial movement or gesticulation; and if Mirah were in the room, he would fall into his old habit of talk with her, gossiping about their former doings and companions, or repeating quirks, and stories, and plots of the plays he used to adapt, in the belief that he could at will command the vivacity of his earlier time. All this was a mortal infliction to Ezra; and when Mirah was at home she tried to relieve him, by getting her father down into the parlour and keeping watch over him there. What duty is made of a single difficult resolve? The difficulty lies in the daily unflinching

support of consequences that mar the blessed return of morning with the prospect of irritation to be suppressed or shame to be endured. And such consequences were being borne by these, as by many other, heroic children of an unworthy father—with the prospect, at least to Mirah, of their stretching onward through the solid part of life.

Meanwhile Lapidoth's presence had raised a new impalpable partition between Deronda and Mirah—each of them dreading the soiling inferences of his mind, each of them interpreting mistakenly the increased reserve and diffidence of the other. But it was not very long before some light came to Deronda.

As soon as he could, after returning from his brief visit to the Abbey, he had called at Hans Meyrick's rooms, feeling it, on more grounds than one, a due of friendship that Hans should be at once acquainted with the reasons of his late journey, and the changes of intention it had brought about. Hans was not there; he was said to be in the country for a few days; and Deronda, after leaving a note, waited a week, rather expecting a note in return. But receiving no word, and fearing some freak of feeling in the incalculably susceptible Hans, whose proposed sojourn at the Abbey he knew had been deferred, he at length made a second call, and was admitted into the painting-room, where he found his friend in a light coat, without a waistcoat, his long hair still wet from a bath, but with a face looking worn and wizened—anything but country-like. He had taken up his palette and brushes, and stood before his

easel when Deronda entered, but the equipment and attitude seemed to have been got up on short notice.

As they shook hands, Deronda said, "You don't look much as if you had been in the country, old fellow. Is it Cambridge you have been to?"

"No," said Hans, curtly, throwing down his palette with the air of one who has begun to feign by mistake; then, pushing forward a chair for Deronda, he threw himself into another, and leaned backward with his hands behind his head, while he went on, "I've been to I-don't-know-where—No man's land—and a mortally unpleasant country it is."

"You don't mean to say you have been drinking, Hans," said Deronda, who had seated himself opposite, in anxious survey.

"Nothing so good. I've been smoking opium. I always meant to do it some time or other, to try how much bliss could be got by it; and having found myself just now rather out of other bliss, I thought it judicious to seize the opportunity. But I pledge you my word I shall never tap a cask of that bliss again. It disagrees with my constitution."

"What has been the matter? You were in good spirits enough when you wrote to me."

"Oh, nothing in particular. The world began to look seedy—a sort of cabbage-garden with all the cabbages cut. A malady of genius, you may be sure," said Hans, creasing his face into a smile; "and, in fact, I was tired of being virtuous without reward, especially in this hot London weather."

"Nothing else? No real vexation?" said Deronda.

Hans shook his head.

"I came to tell you of my own affairs, but I can't do it with a good grace if you are to hide yours."

"Haven't an affair in the world," said Hans, in a flighty way, "except a quarrel with a bric-à-brac man. Besides, as it is the first time in our lives that you ever spoke to me about your own affairs, you are only beginning to pay a pretty long debt."

Deronda felt convinced that Hans was behaving artificially, but he trusted to a return of the old frankness by-and-by if he gave his own confidence.

"You laughed at the mystery of my journey to Italy, Hans," he began. "It was for an object that touched my happiness at the very roots. I had never known anything about my parents, and I really went to Genoa to meet my mother. My father has been long dead—died when I was an infant. My mother was the daughter of an eminent Jew; my father was her cousin. Many things had caused me to think of this origin as almost a probability before I set out. I was so far prepared for the result that I was glad of it—glad to find myself a Jew."

"You must not expect me to look surprised, Deronda," said Hans, who had changed his attitude, laying one leg across the other and examining the heel of his slipper.

"You knew it?"

"My mother told me. She went to the house the morning after you had been there—brother and

sister both told her. You may imagine we can't rejoice as they do. But whatever you are glad of, I shall come to be glad of in the end—*when* exactly the end may be I can't predict," said Hans, speaking in a low tone, which was as unusual with him as it was to be out of humour with his lot, and yet bent on making no fuss about it.

"I quite understand that you can't share my feeling," said Deronda; "but I could not let silence lie between us on what casts quite a new light over my future. I have taken up some of Mordecai's ideas, and I mean to try and carry them out, so far as one man's efforts can go. I daresay I shall by-and-by travel to the East and be away for some years."

Hans said nothing, but rose, seized his palette and began to work his brush on it, standing before his picture with his back to Deronda, who also felt himself at a break in his path, embarrassed by Hans's embarrassment.

Presently Hans said, again speaking low, and without turning, "Excuse the question, but does Mrs Grandcourt know of all this?"

"No; and I must beg of you, Hans," said Deronda, rather angrily, "to cease joking on that subject. Any notions you have are wide of the truth—are the very reverse of the truth."

"I am no more inclined to joke than I shall be at my own funeral," said Hans. "But I am not at all sure that you are aware what are my notions on that subject."

"Perhaps not," said Deronda. "But let me say,

once for all, that in relation to Mrs Grandcourt, I never have had, and never shall have, the position of a lover. If you have ever seriously put that interpretation on anything you have observed, you are supremely mistaken."

There was silence a little while, and to each the silence was like an irritating air, exaggerating discomfort.

"Perhaps I have been mistaken in another interpretation also," said Hans, presently.

"What is that?"

"That you had no wish to hold the position of a lover towards another woman, who is neither wife nor widow."

"I can't pretend not to understand you, Meyrick. It is painful that our wishes should clash. But I hope you will tell me if you have any ground for supposing that you would succeed."

"That seems rather a superfluous inquiry on your part, Deronda," said Hans, with some irritation.

"Why superfluous?"

"Because you are perfectly convinced on the subject—and probably you have had the very best evidence to convince you."

"I will be more frank with you than you are with me," said Deronda, still heated by Hans's show of temper, and yet sorry for him. "I have never had the slightest evidence that I should succeed myself. In fact, I have very little hope."

Hans looked round hastily at his friend, but immediately turned to his picture again.

"And in our present situation," said Deronda,

hurt by the idea that Hans suspected him of insincerity, and giving an offended emphasis to his words, "I don't see how I can deliberately make known my feeling to her. If she could not return it, I should have embittered her best comfort, for neither she nor I can be parted from her brother, and we should have to meet continually. If I were to cause her that sort of pain by an unwilling betrayal of my feeling, I should be no better than a mischievous animal."

"I don't know that I have ever betrayed *my* feeling to her," said Hans, as if he were vindicating himself.

"You mean that we are on a level; then, you have no reason to envy me."

"Oh, not the slightest," said Hans, with bitter irony. "You have measured my conceit and know that it out-tops all your advantages."

"I am a nuisance to you, Meyrick. I am sorry, but I can't help it," said Deronda, rising. "After what passed between us before, I wished to have this explanation; and I don't see that any pretensions of mine have made a real difference to you. They are not likely to make any pleasant difference to myself under present circumstances. Now the father is there—did you know that the father is there?"

"Yes. If he were not a Jew I would permit myself to damn him—with faint praise, I mean," said Hans, but with no smile.

"She and I meet under greater constraint than ever. Things might go on in this way for two

years without my getting any insight into her feeling towards me. That is the whole state of affairs, Hans. Neither you nor I have injured the other, that I can see. We must put up with this sort of rivalry in a hope that is likely enough to come to nothing. Our friendship can bear that strain, surely."

"No, it can't," said Hans, impetuously, throwing down his tools, thrusting his hands into his coat-pockets, and turning round to face Deronda, who drew back a little and looked at him with amazement. Hans went on in the same tone—

"Our friendship—my friendship—can't bear the strain of behaving to you like an ungrateful dastard and grudging you your happiness. For you *are* the happiest dog in the world. If Mirah loves anybody better than her brother, *you are the man.*"

Hans turned on his heel and threw himself into his chair, looking up at Deronda with an expression the reverse of tender. Something like a shock passed through Deronda, and, after an instant, he said—

"It is a good-natured fiction of yours, Hans."

"I am not in a good-natured mood. I assure you I found the fact disagreeable when it was thrust on me—all the more, or perhaps all the less, because I believed then that your heart was pledged to the Duchess. But now, confound you! you turn out to be in love in the right place—a Jew—and everything eligible."

"Tell me what convinced you—there's a good

fellow," said Deronda, distrusting a delight that he was unused to.

"Don't ask. Little mother was witness. The upshot is, that Mirah is jealous of the Duchess, and the sooner you relieve her mind, the better. There! I've cleared off a score or two, and may be allowed to swear at you for getting what you deserve—which is just the very best luck I know of."

"God bless you, Hans!" said Deronda, putting out his hand, which the other took and wrung in silence.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

"All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame."
—COLERIDGE.

DERONDA'S eagerness to confess his love could hardly have had a stronger stimulus than Hans had given it in his assurance that Mirah needed relief from jealousy. He went on his next visit to Ezra with the determination to be resolute in using—nay, in requesting—an opportunity of private conversation with her. If she accepted his love, he felt courageous about all other consequences, and as her betrothed husband he would gain a protective authority which might be a desirable defence for her in future difficulties with her father. Deronda had not observed any signs of growing restlessness in Lapidoth, or of diminished desire to recommend himself; but he had forebodings of some future struggle, some mortification, or some intolerable increase of domestic disquietude in which he might save Ezra and Mirah from being helpless victims.

His forebodings would have been strengthened if he had known what was going on in the father's

mind. That amount of restlessness, that desultoriness of attention, which made a small torture to Ezra, was to Lapidoth an irksome submission to restraint, only made bearable by his thinking of it as a means of by-and-by securing a well-conditioned freedom. He began with the intention of awaiting some really good chance, such as an opening for getting a considerable sum from Deronda; but all the while he was looking about curiously, and trying to discover where Mirah deposited her money and her keys. The imperious gambling desire within him, which carried on its activity through every other occupation, and made a continuous web of imagination that held all else in its meshes, would hardly have been under the control of a protracted purpose, if he had been able to lay his hand on any sum worth capturing. But Mirah, with her practical clear-sightedness, guarded against any frustration of the promise she had given Ezra, by confiding all money, except what she was immediately in want of, to Mrs Meyrick's care, and Lapidoth felt himself under an irritating completeness of supply in kind as in a lunatic asylum where everything was made safe against him. To have opened a desk or drawer of Mirah's, and pocketed any bank-notes found there, would have been to his mind a sort of domestic appropriation which had no disgrace in it; the degrees of liberty a man allows himself with other people's property being often delicately drawn, even beyond the boundary where the law begins to lay its hold—which is the reason why spoons are a safer investment than mining shares. Lapidoth really

felt himself injuriously treated by his daughter, and thought that he ought to have had what he wanted of her other earnings as he had of her apple-tart. But he remained submissive; indeed, the indiscretion that most tempted him, was not any insistence with Mirah, but some kind of appeal to Deronda. Clever persons who have nothing else to sell can often put a good price on their absence, and Lapidoth's difficult search for devices forced upon him the idea that his family would find themselves happier without him, and that Deronda would be willing to advance a considerable sum for the sake of getting rid of him. But, in spite of well-practised hardihood, Lapidoth was still in some awe of Ezra's imposing friend, and deferred his purpose indefinitely.

On this day, when Deronda had come full of a gladdened consciousness, which inevitably showed itself in his air and speech, Lapidoth was at a crisis of discontent and longing that made his mind busy with schemes of freedom, and Deronda's new amenity encouraged them. This preoccupation was at last so strong as to interfere with his usual show of interest in what went forward, and his persistence in sitting by even when there was reading which he could not follow. After sitting a little while, he went out to smoke and walk in the square, and the two friends were all the easier. Mirah was not at home, but she was sure to be in again before Deronda left, and his eyes glowed with a secret anticipation: he thought that when he saw her again he should see some sweetness of recognition for himself to which

his eyes had been sealed before. There was an additional playful affectionateness in his manner towards Ezra.

"This little room is too close for you, Ezra," he said, breaking off his reading. "The week's heat we sometimes get here is worse than the heat in Genoa, where one sits in the shaded coolness of large rooms. You must have a better home now. I shall do as I like with you, being the stronger half." He smiled toward Ezra, who said—

"I am straitened for nothing except breath. But you, who might be in a spacious palace, with the wide green country around you, find this a narrow prison. Nevertheless, I cannot say, 'Go.'"

"Oh, the country would be a banishment while you are here," said Deronda, rising and walking round the double room, which yet offered no long promenade, while he made a great fan of his handkerchief. "This is the happiest room in the world to me. Besides, I will imagine myself in the East, since I am getting ready to go there some day. Only I will not wear a cravat and a heavy ring there," he ended emphatically, pausing to take off those superfluities and deposit them on a small table behind Ezra, who had the table in front of him covered with books and papers.

"I have been wearing my memorable ring ever since I came home," he went on, as he reseated himself. "But I am such a Sybarite that I constantly put it off as a burthen when I am doing anything. I understand why the Romans had sum-

mer rings—*if* they had them. Now then, I shall get on better."

They were soon absorbed in their work again. Deronda was reading a piece of rabbinical Hebrew under Ezra's correction and comment, and they took little notice when Lapidoth re-entered and seated himself somewhat in the background.

His rambling eyes quickly alighted on the ring that sparkled on the bit of dark mahogany. During his walk, his mind had been occupied with the fiction of an advantageous opening for him abroad, only requiring a sum of ready money, which, on being communicated to Deronda in private, might immediately draw from him a question as to the amount of the required sum; and it was this part of his forecast that Lapidoth found the most debateable, there being a danger in asking too much, and a prospective regret in asking too little. His own desire gave him no limit, and he was quite without guidance as to the limit of Deronda's willingness. But now, in the midst of these airy conditions preparatory to a receipt which remained indefinite, this ring, which on Deronda's finger had become familiar to Lapidoth's envy, suddenly shone detached, and within easy grasp. Its value was certainly below the smallest of the imaginary sums that his purpose fluctuated between; but then it was before him as a solid fact, and his desire at once leaped into the thought (not yet an intention) that if he were quietly to pocket that ring and walk away he would have the means of comfortable escape from present restraint, without trouble, and also without danger;

for any property of Deronda's (available without his formal consent) was all one with his children's property, since their father would never be prosecuted for taking it. The details of this thinking followed each other so quickly that they seemed to rise before him as one picture. Lapidoth had never committed larceny; but larceny is a form of appropriation for which people are punished by law; and to take this ring from a virtual relation, who would have been willing to make a much heavier gift, would not come under the head of larceny. Still, the heavier gift was to be preferred, if Lapidoth could only make haste enough in asking for it, and the imaginary action of taking the ring, which kept repeating itself like an inward tune, sank into a rejected idea. He satisfied his urgent longing by resolving to go below, and watch for the moment of Deronda's departure, when he would ask leave to join him in his walk, and boldly carry out his meditated plan. He rose and stood looking out of the window, but all the while he saw what lay behind him—the brief passage he would have to make to the door close by the table where the ring was. However, he was resolved to go down; but—by no distinct change of resolution, rather by a dominance of desire, like the thirst of the drunkard—it so happened that in passing the table his fingers fell noiselessly on the ring, and he found himself in the passage with the ring in his hand. It followed that he put on his hat and quitted the house. The possibility of again throwing himself on his children receded into the indefinite distance, and before he

was out of the square his sense of haste had concentrated itself on selling the ring and getting on shipboard.

Deronda and Ezra were just aware of his exit; that was all. But, by-and-by, Mirah came in and made a real interruption. She had not taken off her hat; and when Deronda rose and advanced to shake hands with her, she said, in a confusion at once unaccountable and troublesome to herself—

"I only came in to see that Ezra had his new draught. I must go directly to Mrs Meyrick's to fetch something."

"Pray allow me to walk with you," said Deronda, urgently. "I must not tire Ezra any further; besides, my brains are melting. I want to go to Mrs Meyrick's: may I go with you?"

"Oh yes," said Mirah, blushing still more, with the vague sense of something new in Deronda, and turning away to pour out Ezra's draught; Ezra meanwhile throwing back his head with his eyes shut, unable to get his mind away from the ideas that had been filling it while the reading was going on. Deronda for a moment stood thinking of nothing but the walk, till Mirah turned round again and brought the draught, when he suddenly remembered that he had laid aside his cravat, and saying —"Pray excuse my dishabille—I did not mean you to see it," he went to the little table, took up his cravat, and exclaimed with a violent impulse of surprise, "Good heavens! where is my ring gone?" beginning to search about on the floor.

Ezra looked round the corner of his chair. Mirah,

quick as thought, went to the spot where Deronda was seeking, and said, "Did you lay it down?"

"Yes," said Deronda, still unvisited by any other explanation than that the ring had fallen and was lurking in shadow, indiscernible on the variegated carpet. He was moving the bits of furniture near, and searching in all possible and impossible places with hand and eyes.

But another explanation had visited Mirah and taken the colour from her cheek. She went to Ezra's ear and whispered, "Was my father here?" He bent his head in reply, meeting her eyes with terrible understanding. She darted back to the spot where Deronda was still casting down his eyes in that hopeless exploration which we are apt to carry on over a space we have examined in vain. "You have not found it?" she said, hurriedly.

He, meeting her frightened gaze, immediately caught alarm from it and answered, "I perhaps put it in my pocket," professing to feel for it there.

She watched him and said, "It is not there?—you put it on the table," with a penetrating voice that would not let him feign to have found it in his pocket; and immediately she rushed out of the room. Deronda followed her—she was gone into the sitting-room below to look for her father—she opened the door of the bedroom to see if he were there—she looked where his hat usually hung—she turned with her hands clasped tight and her lips pale, gazing despairingly out of the window. Then

she looked up at Deronda who had not dared to speak to her in her white agitation. She looked up at him, unable to utter a word—the look seemed a tacit acceptance of the humiliation she felt in his presence. But he, taking her clasped hands between both his, said, in a tone of reverent adoration—

"Mirah, let me think that he is my father as well as yours—that we can have no sorrow, no disgrace, no joy apart. I will rather take your grief to be mine than I would take the brightest joy of another woman. Say you will not reject me—say you will take me to share all things with you. Say you will promise to be my wife—say it now. I have been in doubt so long—I have had to hide my love so long. Say that now and always I may prove to you that I love you with complete love."

The change in Mirah had been gradual. She had not passed at once from anguish to the full, blessed consciousness that, in this moment of grief and shame, Deronda was giving her the highest tribute man can give to woman. With the first tones and the first words, she had only a sense of solemn comfort, referring this goodness of Deronda's to his feeling for Ezra. But by degrees the rapturous assurance of unhoped-for good took possession of her frame; her face glowed under Deronda's as he bent over her; yet she looked up still with intense gravity, as when she had first acknowledged with religious gratitude that he had thought her "worthy of the best;" and when he had finished, she could say nothing—she could only lift up her *lips to* his and just kiss them, as if that were the

simplest "yes." They stood then, only looking at each other, he holding her hands between his—too happy to move, meeting so fully in their new consciousness that all signs would have seemed to throw them farther apart, till Mirah said in a whisper: "Let us go and comfort Ezra."

CHAPTER LXIX.

" The human nature unto which I felt
That I belonged, and reverenced with love,
Was not a punctual presence, but a spirit
Diffused through time and space, with aid derived
Of evidence from monuments, erect,
Prostrate, or leaning towards their common rest
In earth, the widely scattered wreck sublime
Of vanished nations."

—WORDSWORTH: *The Prelude.*

SIR HUGO carried out his plan of spending part of the autumn at Diplow, and by the beginning of October his presence was spreading some cheerfulness in the neighbourhood, among all ranks and persons concerned, from the stately homes of Brackenshaw and Quetcham to the respectable shop-parlours in Wanchester. For Sir Hugo was a man who liked to show himself and be affable, a Liberal of good lineage, who confided entirely in Reform as not likely to make any serious difference in English habits of feeling, one of which undoubtedly is the liking to behold society well fenced and adorned with hereditary rank. Hence he made Diplow a most agreeable house, extending his invitations to old Wanchester solicitors and young village curates,

but also taking some care in the combination of his guests, and not feeding all the common poultry together, so that they should think their meal no particular compliment. Easy-going Lord Brackenshaw, for example, would not mind meeting Robinson the attorney, but Robinson would have been naturally piqued if he had been asked to meet a set of people who passed for his equals. On all these points Sir Hugo was well informed enough at once to gain popularity for himself and give pleasure to others — two results which eminently suited his disposition. The Rector of Pennicote now found a reception at Diplow very different from the haughty tolerance he had undergone during the reign of Grandcourt. It was not only that the baronet liked Mr Gascoigne, it was that he desired to keep up a marked relation of friendliness with him on account of Mrs Grandcourt, for whom Sir Hugo's chivalry had become more and more engaged. Why? The chief reason was one that he could not fully communicate, even to Lady Mallinger—for he would not tell what he thought one woman's secret to another, even though the other was his wife—which shows that his chivalry included a rare reticence.

Deronda, after he had become engaged to Mirah, felt it right to make a full statement of his position and purposes to Sir Hugo, and he chose to make it by letter. He had more than a presentiment that his fatherly friend would feel some dissatisfaction, if not pain, at this turn of his destiny. In reading unwelcome news, instead of hearing it, there is the advantage that one avoids a hasty expression of

impatience which may afterwards be repented of. Deronda dreaded that verbal collision which makes otherwise pardonable feeling lastingly offensive.

And Sir Hugo, though not altogether surprised, was thoroughly vexed. His immediate resource was to take the letter to Lady Mallinger, who would be sure to express an astonishment which her husband could argue against as unreasonable, and in this way divide the stress of his discontent. And in fact when she showed herself astonished and distressed that all Daniel's wonderful talents, and the comfort of having him in the house, should have ended in his going mad in this way about the Jews, the baronet could say—

"Oh, nonsense, my dear! depend upon it, Dan will not make a fool of himself. He has large notions about Judaism—political views which you can't understand. No fear but Dan will keep himself head uppermost."

But with regard to the prospective marriage, she afforded him no counter-irritant. The gentle lady observed, without rancour, that she had little dreamed of what was coming when she had Mirah to sing at her musical party and give lessons to Amabel. After some hesitation, indeed, she confessed it *had* passed through her mind that after a proper time Daniel might marry Mrs Grandcourt —because it seemed so remarkable that he should be at Genoa just at that time—and although she herself was not fond of widows she could not help thinking that such a marriage would have been better than his going altogether with the Jews.

But Sir Hugo was so strongly of the same opinion that he could not correct it as a feminine mistake; and his ill-humour at the disproof of his agreeable conclusions on behalf of Gwendolen was left without vent. He desired Lady Mallinger not to breathe a word about the affair till further notice, saying to himself, "If it is an unkind cut to the poor thing" (meaning Gwendolen), "the longer she is without knowing it the better, in her present nervous state. And she will best learn it from Dan himself." Sir Hugo's conjectures had worked so industriously with his knowledge, that he fancied himself well informed concerning the whole situation.

Meanwhile his residence with his family at Diplow enabled him to continue his fatherly attentions to Gwendolen; and in these Lady Mallinger, notwithstanding her small liking for widows, was quite willing to second him.

The plan of removal to Offendene had been carried out; and Gwendolen, in settling there, maintained a calm beyond her mother's hopes. She was experiencing some of that peaceful melancholy which comes from the renunciation of demands for self, and from taking the ordinary good of existence, and especially kindness, even from a dog, as a gift above expectation. Does one who has been all but lost in a pit of darkness complain of the sweet air and the daylight? There is a way of looking at our life daily as an escape, and taking the quiet return of morn and evening — still more the star-like out-glowing of some pure fellow-feeling, some generous impulse breaking our inward darkness—

as a salvation that reconciles us to hardship. Those who have a self-knowledge prompting such self-accusation as Hamlet's, can understand this habitual feeling of rescue. And it was felt by Gwendolen as she lived through and through again the terrible history of her temptations, from their first form of illusory self-pleasing when she struggled away from the hold of conscience, to their latest form of an urgent hatred dragging her towards its satisfaction, while she prayed and cried for the help of that conscience which she had once forsaken. She was now dwelling on every word of Deronda's that pointed to her past deliverance from the worst evil in herself and the worst infliction of it on others, and on every word that carried a force to resist self-despair.

But she was also upborne by the prospect of soon seeing him again: she did not imagine him otherwise than always within her reach, her supreme need of him blinding her to the separateness of his life, the whole scene of which she filled with his relation to her—no unique preoccupation of Gwendolen's, for we are all apt to fall into this passionate egoism of imagination, not only towards our fellowmen, but towards God. And the future which she turned her face to with a willing step was one where she would be continually assimilating herself to some type that he would hold before her. Had he not first risen on her vision as a corrective presence which she had recognised in the beginning with resentment, and at last with entire love and trust? She could not spontaneously think of an end to that reliance, which had become to her im-

agination like the firmness of the earth, the only condition of her walking.

And Deronda was not long before he came to Diplow, which was at a more convenient distance from town than the Abbey. He had wished to carry out a plan for taking Ezra and Mirah to a mild spot on the coast, while he prepared another home that Mirah might enter as his bride, and where they might unitedly watch over her brother. But Ezra begged not to be removed, unless it were to go with them to the East. All outward solicitations were becoming more and more of a burthen to him; but his mind dwelt on the possibility of this voyage with a visionary joy. Deronda in his preparations for the marriage, which he hoped might not be deferred beyond a couple of months, wished to have fuller consultation as to his resources and affairs generally with Sir Hugo, and here was a reason for not delaying his visit to Diplow. But he thought quite as much of another reason—his promise to Gwendolen. The sense of blessedness in his own lot had yet an aching anxiety at its heart: this may be held paradoxical, for the beloved lover is always called happy, and happiness is considered as a well-fleshed indifference to sorrow outside it. But human experience is usually paradoxical, if that means incongruous with the phrases of current talk or even current philosophy. It was no treason to Mirah, but a part of that full nature which made his love for her the more worthy, that his joy in her could hold by its side the care for another. For what is love itself, for the one we love best?—an enfolding

of immeasurable cares which yet are better than any joys outside our love.

Deronda came twice to Diplow, and saw Gwendolen twice—and yet he went back to town without having told her anything about the change in his lot and prospects. He blamed himself; but in all momentous communication likely to give pain we feel dependent on some preparatory turn of words or associations, some agreement of the other's mood with the probable effect of what we have to impart. In the first interview Gwendolen was so absorbed in what she had to say to him, so full of questions which he must answer, about the arrangement of her life, what she could do to make herself less ignorant, how she could be kindest to everybody, and make amends for her selfishness and try to be rid of it, that Deronda utterly shrank from waiving her immediate wants in order to speak of himself, nay, from inflicting a wound on her in these moments when she was leaning on him for help in her path. In the second interview, when he went with new resolve to command the conversation into some preparatory track, he found her in a state of deep depression, overmastered by those distasteful miserable memories which forced themselves on her as something more real and ample than any new material out of which she could mould her future. She cried hysterically, and said that he would always despise her. He could only seek words of soothing and encouragement; and when she gradually revived under them, with that pathetic look of renewed childlike interest which we see in eyes where the

lashes are still beaded with tears, it was impossible to lay another burthen on her.

But time went on, and he felt it a pressing duty to make the difficult disclosure. Gwendolen, it was true, never recognised his having any affairs; and it had never even occurred to her to ask him why he happened to be at Genoa. But this unconsciousness of hers would make a sudden revelation of affairs that were determining his course in life all the heavier blow to her; and if he left the revelation to be made by indifferent persons, she would feel that he had treated her with cruel inconsiderateness. He could not make the communication in writing: his tenderness could not bear to think of her reading his virtual farewell in solitude, and perhaps feeling his words full of a hard gladness for himself and indifference for her. He went down to Diplow again, feeling that every other peril was to be incurred rather than that of returning and leaving her still in ignorance.

On this third visit Deronda found Hans Meyrick installed with his easel at Diplow, beginning his picture of the three daughters sitting on a bank "in the Gainsborough style," and varying his work by rambling to Pennicote to sketch the village children and improve his acquaintance with the Gascoignes. Hans appeared to have recovered his vivacity, but Deronda detected some feigning in it, as we detect the artificiality of a lady's bloom from its being a little too high-toned and steadily persistent (a "Fluctuating Rouge" not having yet appeared among the advertisements). Also, with all his grateful friend-

ship and admiration for Deronda, Hans could not help a certain irritation against him such as extremely incautious, open natures are apt to feel when the breaking of a friend's reserve discloses a state of things not merely unsuspected but the reverse of what had been hoped and ingeniously conjectured. It is true that poor Hans had always cared chiefly to confide in Deronda, and had been quite incurious as to any confidence that might have been given in return; but what outpourer of his own affairs is not tempted to think any hint of his friend's affairs as an egoistic irrelevance? That was no reason why it was not rather a sore reflection to Hans that while he had been all along naïvely opening his heart about Mirah, Deronda had kept secret a feeling of rivalry which now revealed itself as the important determining fact. Moreover, it is always at their peril that our friends turn out to be something more than we were aware of. Hans must be excused for these promptings of bruised sensibility, since he had not allowed them to govern his substantial conduct: he had the consciousness of having done right by his fortunate friend; or, as he told himself, "his metal had given a better ring than he would have sworn to beforehand." For Hans had always said that in point of virtue he was a *dilettante:* which meant that he was very fond of it in other people, but if he meddled with it himself he cut a poor figure. Perhaps in reward of his good behaviour he gave his tongue the more freedom; and he was too fully possessed by the notion of Deronda's happiness to have a conception of what

he was feeling about Gwendolen, so that he spoke of her without hesitation.

"When did you come down, Hans?" said Deronda, joining him in the grounds where he was making a study of the requisite bank and trees.

"Oh, ten days ago—before the time Sir Hugo fixed. I ran down with Rex Gascoigne and stayed at the Rectory a day or two. I'm up in all the gossip of these parts—I know the state of the wheelwright's interior, and have assisted at an infant school examination. Sister Anna with the good upper lip escorted me, else I should have been mobbed by three urchins and an idiot, because of my long hair and a general appearance which departs from the Pennicote type of the beautiful. Altogether, the village is idyllic. Its only fault is a dark curate with broad shoulders and broad trousers who ought to have gone into the heavy drapery line. The Gascoignes are perfect—besides being related to the Vandyke duchess. I caught a glimpse of her in her black robes at a distance, though she doesn't show to visitors."

"She was not staying at the Rectory?" said Deronda.

"No; but I was taken to Offendene to see the old house, and as a consequence I saw the duchess's family. I suppose you have been there and know all about them?"

"Yes, I have been there," said Deronda, quietly.

"A fine old place. An excellent setting for a widow with romantic fortunes. And she seems to have had several romances. I think I have found

out that there was one between her and my friend Rex."

"Not long before her marriage, then?" said Deronda, really interested; "for they had only been a year at Offendene How came you to know anything of it?"

"Oh—not ignorant of what it is to be a miserable devil, I learn to gloat on the signs of misery in others. I found out that Rex never goes to Offendene, and has never seen the duchess since she came back; and Miss Gascoigne let fall something in our talk about charade-acting—for I went through some of my nonsense to please the young ones—something which proved to me that Rex was once hovering about his fair cousin close enough to get singed. I don't know what was her part in the affair. Perhaps the duke came in and carried her off. That is always the way when an exceptionally worthy young man forms an attachment. I understand now why Gascoigne talks of making the law his mistress and remaining a bachelor. But these are green resolves. Since the duke did not get himself drowned for your sake, it may turn out to be for my friend Rex's sake. Who knows?"

"Is it absolutely necessary that Mrs Grandcourt should marry again?" said Deronda, ready to add that Hans's success in constructing her fortunes hitherto had not been enough to warrant a new attempt.

"You monster!" retorted Hans, "do you want her to wear weeds for *you* all her life—burn her-

self in perpetual suttee while you are alive and merry?"

Deronda could say nothing, but he looked so much annoyed that Hans turned the current of his chat, and when he was alone shrugged his shoulders a little over the thought that there really had been some stronger feeling between Deronda and the duchess than Mirah would like to know of. "Why didn't she fall in love with me?" thought Hans, laughing at himself. "She would have had no rivals. No woman ever wanted to discuss theology with me."

No wonder that Deronda winced under that sort of joking with a whip-lash. It touched sensibilities that were already quivering with the anticipation of witnessing some of that pain to which even Hans's light words seemed to give more reality—any sort of recognition by another giving emphasis to the subject of our anxiety. And now he had come down with the firm resolve that he would not again evade the trial. The next day he rode to Offendene. He had sent word that he intended to call and to ask if Gwendolen could receive him; and he found her awaiting him in the old drawing-room where some chief crises of her life had happened. She seemed less sad than he had seen her since her husband's death; there was no smile on her face, but a placid self-possession, in contrast with the mood in which he had last found her. She was all the more alive to the sadness perceptible in Deronda; and they were no sooner seated—he at a little distance opposite to her—than she said:

"You were afraid of coming to see me, because I was so full of grief and despair the last time. But I am not so to-day. I have been sorry ever since. I have been making it a reason why I should keep up my hope and be as cheerful as I can, because I would not give you any pain about me."

There was an unwonted sweetness in Gwendolen's tone and look as she uttered these words that seemed to Deronda to infuse the utmost cruelty into the task now laid upon him. But he felt obliged to make his answer a beginning of the task.

"I *am* in some trouble to-day," he said, looking at her rather mournfully; "but it is because I have things to tell you which you will almost think it a want of confidence on my part not to have spoken of before. They are things affecting my own life—my own future. I shall seem to have made an ill return to you for the trust you have placed in me —never to have given you an idea of events that make great changes for me. But when we have been together we have hardly had time to enter into subjects which at the moment were really less pressing to me than the trials you have been going through." There was a sort of timid tenderness in Deronda's deep tones, and he paused with a pleading look, as if it had been Gwendolen only who had conferred anything in her scenes of beseeching and confession.

A thrill of surprise was visible in her. Such meaning as she found in his words had shaken her, but without causing fear. Her mind had flown at once to some change in his position with regard to

Sir Hugo and Sir Hugo's property. She said, with a sense of comfort from Deronda's way of asking her pardon—

"You never thought of anything but what you could do to help me; and I was so troublesome. How could you tell me things?"

"It will perhaps astonish you," said Deronda, "that I have only quite lately known who were my parents."

Gwendolen was not astonished: she felt the more assured that her expectations of what was coming were right. Deronda went on without check.

"The reason why you found me in Italy was that I had gone there to learn that—in fact, to meet my mother. It was by her wish that I was brought up in ignorance of my parentage. She parted with me after my father's death, when I was a little creature. But she is now very ill, and she felt that the secrecy ought not to be any longer maintained. Her chief reason had been that she did not wish me to know I was a Jew."

"A *Jew!*" Gwendolen exclaimed, in a low tone of amazement, with an utterly frustrated look, as if some confusing potion were creeping through her system.

Deronda coloured and did not speak, while Gwendolen, with her eyes fixed on the floor, was struggling to find her way in the dark by the aid of various reminiscences. She seemed at last to have arrived at some judgment, for she looked up at Deronda again and said, as if remonstrating against the mother's conduct—

"What difference need that have made?"

"It has made a great difference to me that I have known it," said Deronda, emphatically; but he could not go on easily—the distance between her ideas and his acted like a difference of native language, making him uncertain what force his words would carry.

Gwendolen meditated again, and then said feelingly, "I hope there is nothing to make you mind. *You* are just the same as if you were not a Jew."

She meant to assure him that nothing of that external sort could affect the way in which she regarded him, or the way in which he could influence her. Deronda was a little helped by this misunderstanding.

"The discovery was far from being painful to me," he said. "I had been gradually prepared for it, and I was glad of it. I had been prepared for it by becoming intimate with a very remarkable Jew, whose ideas have attracted me so much that I think of devoting the best part of my life to some effort at giving them effect."

Again Gwendolen seemed shaken—again there was a look of frustration, but this time it was mingled with alarm. She looked at Deronda with lips childishly parted. It was not that she had yet connected his words with Mirah and her brother, but that they had inspired her with a dreadful presentiment of mountainous travel for her mind before it could reach Deronda's. Great ideas in general which she had attributed to him seemed to make no great practical difference, and were not formidable in the same way as these mysteriously-shadowed par-

ticular ideas. He could not quite divine what was going on within her; he could only seek the least abrupt path of disclosure.

"That is an object," he said, after a moment, "which will by-and-by force me to leave England for some time—for some years. I have purposes which will take me to the East."

Here was something clearer, but all the more immediately agitating. Gwendolen's lip began to tremble. "But you will come back?" she said, tasting her own tears as they fell, before she thought of drying them.

Deronda could not sit still. He rose, and went to prop himself against the corner of the mantelpiece, at a different angle from her face. But when she had pressed her handkerchief against her cheeks, she turned and looked up at him, awaiting an answer.

"If I live," said Deronda—"*some time.*"

They were both silent. He could not persuade himself to say more unless she led up to it by a question; and she was apparently meditating something that she had to say.

"What are you going to do?" she asked, at last, very timidly. "Can I understand the ideas, or am I too ignorant?"

"I am going to the East to become better acquainted with the condition of my race in various countries there," said Deronda, gently—anxious to be as explanatory as he could on what was the impersonal part of their separateness from each other. "The idea that I am possessed with is that of re-

storing a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national centre, such as the English have, though they too are scattered over the face of the globe. That is a task which presents itself to me as a duty: I am resolved to begin it, however feebly. I am resolved to devote my life to it. At the least, I may awaken a movement in other minds, such as has been awakened in my own."

There was a long silence between them. The world seemed getting larger round poor Gwendolen, and she more solitary and helpless in the midst. The thought that he might come back after going to the East, sank before the bewildering vision of these wide-stretching purposes in which she felt herself reduced to a mere speck. There comes a terrible moment to many souls when the great movements of the world, the larger destinies of mankind, which have lain aloof in newspapers and other neglected reading, enter like an earthquake into their own lives—when the slow urgency of growing generations turns into the tread of an invading army or the dire clash of civil war, and grey fathers know nothing to seek for but the corpses of their blooming sons, and girls forget all vanity to make lint and bandages which may serve for the shattered limbs of their betrothed husbands. Then it is as if the Invisible Power that has been the object of lip-worship and lip-resignation became visible, according to the imagery of the Hebrew poet, making the flames his chariot, and riding on the wings of the wind, till the mountains smoke

and the plains shudder under the rolling fiery visitation. Often the good cause seems to lie prostrate under the thunder of unrelenting force, the martyrs live reviled, they die, and no angel is seen holding forth the crown and the palm branch. Then it is that the submission of the soul to the Highest is tested, and even in the eyes of frivolity life looks out from the scene of human struggle with the awful face of duty, and a religion shows itself which is something else than a private consolation.

That was the sort of crisis which was at this moment beginning in Gwendolen's small life: she was for the first time feeling the pressure of a vast mysterious movement, for the first time being dislodged from her supremacy in her own world, and getting a sense that her horizon was but a dipping onward of an existence with which her own was revolving. All the troubles of her wifehood and widowhood had still left her with the implicit impression which had accompanied her from childhood, that whatever surrounded her was somehow specially for her, and it was because of this that no personal jealousy had been roused in her in relation to Deronda: she could not spontaneously think of him as rightfully belonging to others more than to her. But here had come a shock which went deeper than personal jealousy—something spiritual and vaguely tremendous that thrust her away, and yet quelled all anger into self-humiliation.

There had been a long silence. Deronda had stood still, even thankful for an interval before he

needed to say more, and Gwendolen had sat like a statue with her wrists lying over each other and her eyes fixed—the intensity of her mental action arresting all other excitation. At length something occurred to her that made her turn her face to Deronda and say in a trembling voice—

"Is that all you can tell me?"

The question was like a dart to him. "The Jew whom I mentioned just now," he answered, not without a certain tremor in his tones too, "the remarkable man who has greatly influenced my mind, has not perhaps been totally unheard of by you. He is the brother of Miss Lapidoth, whom you have often heard sing."

A great wave of remembrance passed through Gwendolen and spread as a deep, painful flush over face and neck. It had come first as the scene of that morning when she had called on Mirah, and heard Deronda's voice reading, and been told, without then heeding it, that he was reading Hebrew with Mirah's brother.

"He is very ill—very near death now," Deronda went on, nervously, and then stopped short. He felt that he must wait. Would she divine the rest?

"Did she tell you that I went to her?" said Gwendolen, abruptly, looking up at him.

"No," said Deronda. "I don't understand you."

She turned away her eyes again, and sat thinking. Slowly the colour died out of face and neck, and she was as pale as before—with that almost withered paleness which is seen after a painful flush. At last she said, without turning towards him—in a low,

measured voice, as if she were only thinking aloud in preparation for future speech—

"But *can* you marry?"

"Yes," said Deronda, also in a low voice. "I am going to marry."

At first there was no change in Gwendolen's attitude: she only began to tremble visibly; then she looked before her with dilated eyes, as at something lying in front of her, till she stretched her arms out straight, and cried with a smothered voice—

"I said I should be forsaken. I have been a cruel woman. And I am forsaken."

Deronda's anguish was intolerable. He could not help himself. He seized her outstretched hands and held them together, and kneeled at her feet. She was the victim of his happiness.

"I am cruel too, I am cruel," he repeated, with a sort of groan, looking up at her imploringly.

His presence and touch seemed to dispel a horrible vision, and she met his upward look of sorrow with something like the return of consciousness after fainting. Then she dwelt on it with that growing pathetic movement of the brow which accompanies the revival of some tender recollection. The look of sorrow brought back what seemed a very far-off moment — the first time she had ever seen it, in the library at the Abbey. Sobs rose, and great tears fell fast. Deronda would not let her hands go—held them still with one of his, and himself pressed her handkerchief against her eyes. She submitted like a half-soothed child, making an effort to

speak, which was hindered by struggling sobs. At last she succeeded in saying brokenly—

"I said . . . I said . . . it should be better . . . better with me . . . for having known you."

His eyes too were larger with tears. She wrested one of her hands from his, and returned his action, pressing his tears away.

"We shall not be quite parted," he said. "I will write to you always, when I can, and you will answer?"

He waited till she said in a whisper, "I will try."

"I shall be more with you than I used to be," Deronda said with gentle urgency, releasing her hands and rising from his kneeling posture. "If we had been much together before, we should have felt our differences more, and seemed to get farther apart. Now we can perhaps never see each other again. But our minds may get nearer."

Gwendolen said nothing, but rose too, automatically. Her withered look of grief, such as the sun often shines on when the blinds are drawn up after the burial of life's joy, made him hate his own words: they seemed to have the hardness of easy consolation in them. She felt that he was going, and that nothing could hinder it. The sense of it was like a dreadful whisper in her ear, which dulled all other consciousness; and she had not known that she was rising.

Deronda could not speak again. He thought that they must part in silence, but it was difficult to move towards the parting, till she looked at him with a sort of intention in her eyes, which helped him. He advanced to put out his hand silently, and when she

had placed hers within it, she said what her mind had been labouring with—

"You have been very good to me. I have deserved nothing. I will try—try to live. I shall think of you. What good have I been? Only harm. Don't let me be harm to *you*. It shall be the better for me——"

She could not finish. It was not that she was sobbing, but that the intense effort with which she spoke made her too tremulous. The burthen of that difficult rectitude towards him was a weight her frame tottered under.

She bent forward to kiss his cheek, and he kissed hers. Then they looked at each other for an instant with clasped hands, and he turned away.

When he was quite gone, her mother came in and found her sitting motionless.

"Gwendolen, dearest, you look very ill," she said, bending over her and touching her cold hands.

"Yes, mamma. But don't be afraid. I am going to live," said Gwendolen, bursting out hysterically.

Her mother persuaded her to go to bed, and watched by her. Through the day and half the night she fell continually into fits of shrieking, but cried in the midst of them to her mother, "Don't be afraid. I shall live. I mean to live."

After all, she slept; and when she waked in the morning light, she looked up fixedly at her mother and said tenderly, "Ah, poor mamma! You have been sitting up with me. Don't be unhappy. I shall live. I shall be better."

CHAPTER LXX.

In the chequered area of human experience the seasons are all mingled as in the golden age: fruit and blossom hang together; in the same moment the sickle is reaping and the seed is sprinkled; one tends the green cluster and another treads the wine-press. Nay, in each of our lives harvest and spring-time are continually one, until Death himself gathers us and sows us anew in his invisible fields.

Among the blessings of love there is hardly one more exquisite than the sense that in uniting the beloved life to ours we can watch over its happiness, bring comfort where hardship was, and over memories of privation and suffering open the sweetest fountains of joy. Deronda's love for Mirah was strongly imbued with that blessed protectiveness. Even with infantine feet she had begun to tread among thorns; and the first time he had beheld her face it had seemed to him the girlish image of despair.

But now she was glowing like a dark-tipped yet delicate ivory-tinted flower in the warm sunlight of content, thinking of any possible grief as part of that life with Deronda which she could call by no other name than good. And he watched the sober gladness which gave new beauty to her movements and her habitual attitudes of repose, with a

delight which made him say to himself that it was enough of personal joy for him to save her from pain. She knew nothing of Hans's struggle or of Gwendolen's pang; for after the assurance that Deronda's hidden love had been for her, she easily explained Gwendolen's eager solicitude about him as part of a grateful dependence on his goodness, such as she herself had known. And all Deronda's words about Mrs Grandcourt confirmed that view of their relation, though he never touched on it except in the most distant manner. Mirah was ready to believe that he had been a rescuing angel to many besides herself. The only wonder was, that she among them all was to have the bliss of being continually by his side.

So, when the bridal veil was around Mirah it hid no doubtful tremors—only a thrill of awe at the acceptance of a great gift which required great uses. And the velvet canopy never covered a more goodly bride and bridegroom, to whom their people might more wisely wish offspring; more truthful lips never touched the sacramental marriage-wine; the marriage-blessing never gathered stronger promise of fulfilment than in the integrity of their mutual pledge. Naturally, they were married according to the Jewish rite. And since no religion seems yet to have demanded that when we make a feast we should invite only the highest rank of our acquaintances, few, it is to be hoped, will be offended to learn that among the guests at Deronda's little wedding-feast was the entire Cohen family, with the one exception of the baby who carried on her

teething intelligently at home. How could Mordecai have borne that those friends of his adversity should have been shut out from rejoicing in common with him?

Mrs Meyrick so fully understood this that she had quite reconciled herself to meeting the Jewish pawnbroker, and was there with her three daughters—all of them enjoying the consciousness that Mirah's marriage to Deronda crowned a romance which would always make a sweet memory to them. For which of them, mother or girls, had not had a generous part in it—giving their best in feeling and in act to her who needed? If Hans could have been there, it would have been better; but Mab had already observed that men must suffer for being so inconvenient: suppose she, Kate, and Amy had all fallen in love with Mr Deronda?—but being women, they were not so ridiculous.

The Meyricks were rewarded for conquering their prejudices by hearing a speech from Mr Cohen, which had the rare quality among speeches of not being quite after the usual pattern. Jacob ate beyond his years; and contributed several small whinnying laughs as a free accompaniment of his father's speech, not irreverently, but from a lively sense that his family was distinguishing itself; while Adelaide Rebekah, in a new Sabbath frock, maintained throughout a grave air of responsibility.

Mordecai's brilliant eyes, sunken in their large sockets, dwelt on the scene with the cherishing benignancy of a spirit already lifted into an aloofness which nullified only selfish requirements and

left sympathy alive. But continually, after his gaze had been travelling round on the others, it returned to dwell on Deronda with a fresh gleam of trusting affection.

The wedding-feast was humble, but Mirah was not without splendid wedding-gifts. As soon as the bethrothal had been known, there were friends who had entertained graceful devices. Sir Hugo and Lady Mallinger had taken trouble to provide a complete equipment for Eastern travel, as well as a precious locket containing an inscription—"*To the bride of our dear Daniel Deronda all blessings.—H. & L. M.*" The Klesmers sent a perfect watch, also with a pretty inscription.

But something more precious than gold and gems came to Deronda from the neighbourhood of Diplow on the morning of his marriage. It was a letter containing these words:—

Do not think of me sorrowfully on your wedding-day. I have remembered your words—that I may live to be one of the best of women, who make others glad that they were born. I do not yet see how that can be, but you know better than I. If it ever comes true, it will be because you helped me. I only thought of myself, and I made you grieve. It hurts me now to think of your grief. You must not grieve any more for me. It is better—it shall be better with me because I have known you.

GWENDOLEN GRANDCOURT.

The preparations for the departure of all three

to the East began at once; for Deronda could not deny Ezra's wish that they should set out on the voyage forthwith, so that he might go with them, instead of detaining them to watch over him. He had no belief that Ezra's life would last through the voyage, for there were symptoms which seemed to show that the last stage of his malady had set in. But Ezra himself had said, "Never mind where I die, so that I am with you."

He did not set out with them. One morning early he said to Deronda, "Do not quit me to-day. I shall die before it is ended."

He chose to be dressed and sit up in his easy-chair as usual, Deronda and Mirah on each side of him, and for some hours he was unusually silent, not even making the effort to speak, but looking at them occasionally with eyes full of some restful meaning, as if to assure them that while this remnant of breathing-time was difficult, he felt an ocean of peace beneath him.

It was not till late in the afternoon, when the light was falling, that he took a hand of each in his and said, looking at Deronda, "Death is coming to me as the divine kiss which is both parting and reunion—which takes me from your bodily eyes and gives me full presence in your soul. Where thou goest, Daniel, I shall go. Is it not begun? Have I not breathed my soul into you? We shall live together."

He paused, and Deronda waited, thinking that there might be another word for him. But slowly and with effort Ezra, pressing on their hands, raised

himself and uttered in Hebrew the confession of the divine Unity, which for long generations has been on the lips of the dying Israelite.

He sank back gently into his chair, and did not speak again. But it was some hours before he had ceased to breathe, with Mirah's and Deronda's arms around him.

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

THE END.

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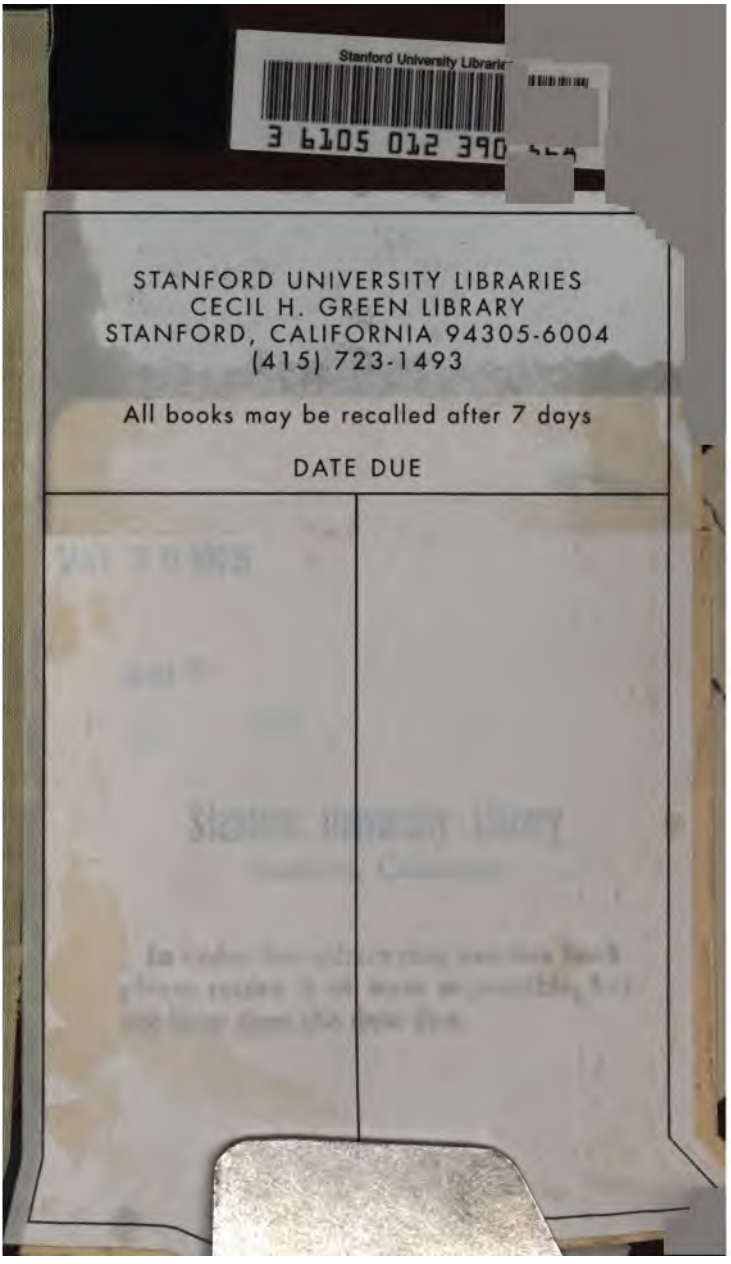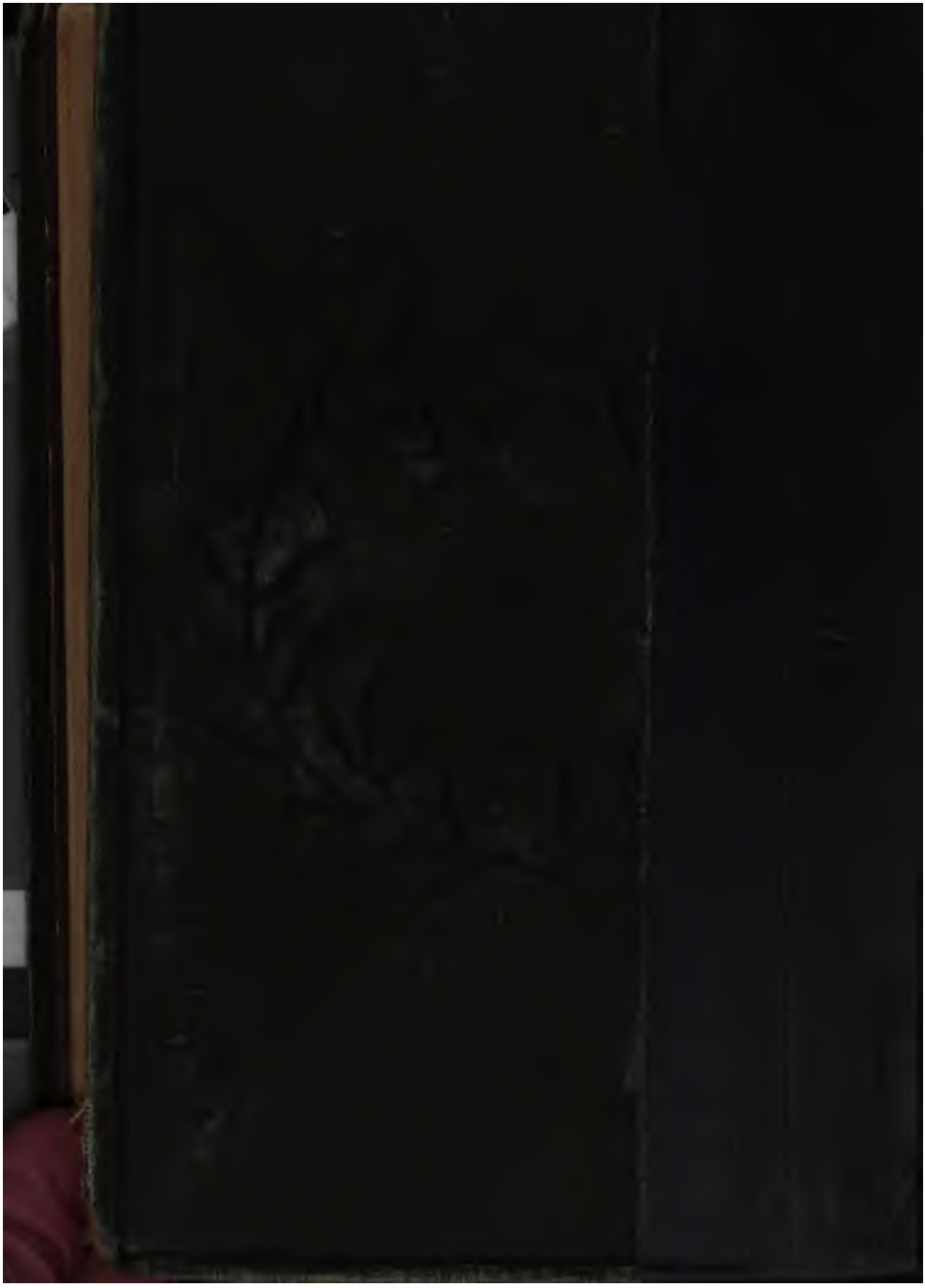
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